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IBC WORLD NEWS
CH ABC
Certified English Daily

P9

US-Iran ceasefire on 'life support': Trump

P11

India taps huge wealth from green biogas

P12

Shreyas criticised as Chahal unused in Punjab loss to Delhi

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HBS 2.0: 'Mama' back on hot seat

Himanta Biswa Sarma, BJP's giant-killer, sworn-in as Assam CM along with 4 ministers; becomes the first non-Congress leader in the state to assume charge as the CM for a second successive term

GUWAHATI

BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma, fondly called as 'Mama' by people, was sworn in as the Chief Minister of India's north-eastern state of Assam for a second consecutive term on Tuesday.

Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office and secrecy to Sarma at a ceremony held at the Veterinary College Ground in Khanapara. BJP leaders Ajanta Neog and Rameswar Teli, along with Atul Bora of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and Charan Boro of the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) also took oath on the occasion. Himanta bowed to the crowd after taking the oath.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP national president Nitin Nabin, along with chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of NDA-ruled states attended the grand ceremony.

Except for Teli, the other three ministers were also part of the previous NDA government in Assam.

Ranjeet Kumar Dass, a former minister and prominent BJP figure, will represent the NDA as the candidate for the role of Speaker of the state Assembly.

The NDA, comprising the BJP, AGP, and BPF, secured a landmark victory in the recently concluded Assembly elections in the state, winning 102 seats in the 126-member House. The BJP alone won 82 Assembly seats, while AGP and BPF won 10 seats each.

Himanta (57) was unanimously elected leader of the BJP Legislature Party and NDA Legislature Party in Assam. Following this, he met Governor Acharya and staked a claim to form the new government.

Himanta's rise and Assam's political shift

Himanta Biswa Sarma is widely recognised as the key architect of the BJP's rapid expansion in Northeast India, transforming the region from a Congress stronghold into a BJP fortress.The BJP, whose vote share in Assam remained less than 12% until a decade ago, came to power in 2016 and has retained control since then. Its vote share has increased to 38%.Sarma is the legislator from Jalukbari constituency, located on the northwestern periphery of Guwahati - the largest city in the northeast. He has held the seat since 2001 despite changing political affiliations.Before joining the BJP in 2015, Sarma was a Congress leader in Assam and a minister in the government led by former chief minister Tarun Gogoi. Gogoi's son Gaurav, who lost in the recent election from the Jorhat seat, is currently the main opposition leader of the state.Sarma's move to the BJP, along with several legislators loyal to him, was seen as a major political setback for the state Congress. Many political observers say it was a turning point in the BJP's expansion in the region.

The making of BJP's giant-slayer

FROM CONGRESS TO BJP
- Himanta joined the BJP in 2015 and played a central role in forging alliances and boosting the party's influence across states like Assam, Manipur, and Tripura.

ASSAM DOMINANCE
- He has been instrumental in the BJP winning consecutive terms in Assam since 2016.

REGIONAL INFLUENCE
- Beyond Assam, Himanta is credited with being a key organiser in the Northeast, driving the party's success in neighboring states.

STRATEGIC APPROACH
- He blended ideological shifts with administrative pragmatism, enabling the BJP to move beyond its traditional base.

NE POLITICAL FORCE
- His role as a principal strategist and campaigner has cemented his status as one of the BJP's most important leaders in the region.

Assam's longest-serving woman MLA

AJANTA NEOG: A six-time MLA from Golaghat and a veteran tea tribe leader, Neog is the state's longest-serving woman legislator, representing the constituency continuously since 2001. She also became the state's first and only woman finance minister after assuming the portfolio in 2021. Previously a Congress leader and minister in the Tarun Gogoi-led governments, 62-year-old Neog joined the BJP in 2020 and retained her seat in a bypoll. Her husband, former Congress minister Nagen Neog, was killed in a militant attack in 1996.

NEW MINISTERS

Rameswar Teli | Ajanta Neog | Atul Bora | Charan Boro

Don't mock Modi, learn from history: Gowda to Siddu over austerity appeal

Gowda mentioned a speech by Indira Gandhi in Nagpur where she urged the people to 'drink tea once and eat less', which led to a public outcry and a near-riot situation.

HASSAN

Former prime minister and JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda on Tuesday advised Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to understand the context of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statements and cautioned him against making 'light' remarks against the PM.

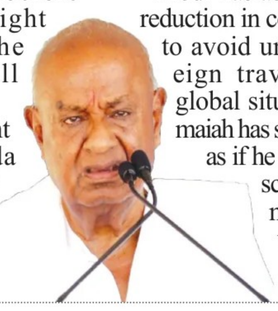
Speaking to reporters in Hassan regarding Siddaramaiah's reaction to the Modi's recent speech, Gowda said, "Siddaramaiah, you are in a responsible position and have presented 16 budgets. It would be better if you reflect on historical events before speaking. Making light comments about the Prime Minister will take you nowhere".

Recalling an incident from the past, Gowda mentioned a speech by Indira Gandhi in Nagpur where she urged the people to 'drink tea once and eat less', which led to a public outcry and a near-riot situation. "The police had to physically shield her and take her away. There was no SPG protection in those days," he noted.

He referred to the time when Bangladesh was split from Pakistan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was made President. "Then, Indira Gandhi was presented with a golden sword at Ramlila Maidan. Even then, sugar was priced at Rs 18 per kg and kerosene at Rs 12 per litre," Gowda recalled, drawing a parallel to the economic challenges of the past.

Defending PM Modi's recent advice to the citizens to reduce the use of petrol, diesel, and cooking oil and to avoid foreign trips and buying gold ornaments, Gowda stated that the current 40-day war in West Asia, involving three nations, is a major cause of global strain, and Modi is not responsible for it.

"Modi has asked for a slight reduction in consumption and to avoid unnecessary foreign travel, given the global situation. Siddaramaiah has spoken about this, as if he possesses great scholarly wisdom, mocking the advice," Gowda criticised.



NEET 2026 scrapped, probe uncovers 'private mafia'

NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency on Tuesday cancelled the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) 2026 for medical admissions, conducted on May 3, after investigators uncovered a multi-state paper leak network operating through WhatsApp groups, Telegram channels and coaching-linked digital circuits.

The CBI, which has registered in this regard, has found a social media group with 400 members, where sample papers were shared in which around 70% questions were similar to those which appeared in the NEET.

The agency said that a probe by the Rajasthan police's Special Operations Group found a handwritten "guess paper" which is likely a sample or practice question bank containing 281 questions, of which 135 matched questions that appeared in the NEET held on May 3.

According to government sources, investigators have managed to trace the alleged paper leak chain, with the network reportedly originating from a meeting of racket members in Nashik, Maharashtra.

'Private Mafia' under scanner

The probe has now widened into a massive digital leak network involving WhatsApp groups and Telegram channels allegedly used to circulate examination questions ahead of the medical entrance test. According to Rajasthan Police Special Operations Group sources, investigators have discovered a WhatsApp group "Private Mafia" that allegedly functioned as a hub for sharing leaked examination material.

60 questions matched 'word for word'

The digital trail emerged after Rajasthan SOG recovered a handwritten "guess paper" during its investigation into the alleged leak racket. Investigators claimed that nearly 60 questions from the document matched the actual NEET-UG 2026 examination paper exactly including wording, punctuation, answer options and sequence.

Nashik-Haryana pipeline

Government sources indicate that the physical trail of the paper leak has now been successfully tracked, revealing a sophisticated logistics operation. The conspiracy reportedly took shape in Nashik, Maharashtra, where key racket members met to coordinate the heist. From Nashik, a single physical copy of the paper was sent to Haryana. Once there, the syndicate created five different sets, each consisting of 10 copies. These sets were then dispatched through a coordinated nexus to five specific regions: Andhra Pradesh; Jammu and Kashmir; Rajasthan; Telangana;

45 people in custody

Rajasthan SOG sources said nearly 45 individuals have so far been taken into custody in connection with the case. Investigators have identified Manish Yadav as the alleged mastermind behind the operation, while Rakesh Mandawariya is accused of distributing the leaked paper.

NEET fiasco: Karnataka govt revives demand to scrap NEET

BENGALURU

The state government has reiterated its demand to scrap the NEET for medical admissions after the Centre cancelled it on Tuesday following a paper leak.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said in a statement that the NEET cancellation and re-exam would impact over one lakh students from the state. "Students worked hard for months, while parents spent on coaching, travel and other expenses with the hope of a fair exam. In one stroke, the Centre has pushed them back into uncertainty and distress."

He said that his government had, in 2024, flagged that NEET was "unfair to rural, poor students" and that it "weakens school education" while snatching the "rightful authority" of the state over admissions. "Today's cancellation proves that our concerns were real, urgent and rooted in the interests of students." "We demand a transparent, time-bound investigation, strict punishment for the guilty, immediate clarity on the fresh exam schedule, and restoration of States' authority to conduct such entrance exams," he said.

Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil said coaching centres in Rajasthan and Haryana are "actively orchestrating" paper leaks. "Elements within the Centre are complicit in this racket," he said and demanded the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Govt plans to go ahead with engg seat allotment

Higher Education Minister Dr MC Sudhakar said the Karnataka Examinations Authority wants to allot engineering seats without waiting for the NEET results. "We're planning to commence engineering seat allotment as per the schedule instead of waiting for NEET." The NEET re-exam will lead to a delay in the engineering seat allotment here. "Every year, the NEET counselling schedule is affecting the allotment of engineering seats," a KEA official said.

K'taka to witness political change in May: Rajanna

BENGALURU

Congress MLA KN Rajanna has reiterated that political developments are likely to take place in Karnataka during the month of May.

Speaking to reporters here on Tuesday, he said the election process in five states has not yet been fully completed and that further developments would become clear once the process concludes.

He noted that the selection of the chief minister in Kerala is still pending and said he would speak in greater detail after that process is completed. "I had said there would be changes in May, and I stand by that statement."

He further said that many legislators have been pressing for a cabinet reshuffle. According to him, several MLAs have travelled to New Delhi and met senior party leaders to convey their views. The party high command would have to take a call if there is to be any change in leadership, he added.

Kerala CM race: Rahul holds talks as Cong weighs top contenders

NEW DELHI

Consultations for choosing a name for Kerala's Chief Minister entered the last leg on Tuesday, with top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi holding discussions with working presidents and former State presidents here who favoured K C Venugopal and V D Satheesan, depending on their stand.

Former presidents MM Hassan, K Sudhakaran, K Muralidharan and VM Sudheeran, disciplinary committee chairman Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan and working presidents Shafi Parambil, AP Anilkumar and PC Vishnunath met Rahul separately. Rahul is also learnt to have spoken to another former Kerala chief Mullappally Ramachrandra over the phone as also with former Chief Minister AK Antony.

The wider consultations came as the 'high command' could not zero in on a name from among the contenders — Venugopal, Satheesan and Ramesh Chennithala — after a three-hour-long meeting Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul had on Saturday, as the trio refused to relent from their positions.

While Venugopal is learnt to have overwhelming support of MLAs, Satheesan has gained the support of general public and party workers as also allies such as the Muslim League.

Man charred to death after EV catches fire

BENGALURU

A senior citizen was charred to death after an electric scooter allegedly caught fire while being charged at his house in Murphy Town in Halasuru in the early hours of Tuesday, officials said.

Lourd Nathan (65) was sleeping in a small room on the ground floor of his house where the EV was kept for charging.

Around 3 am, the vehicle allegedly caught fire, triggering a blast and rapidly spreading flames across the room. His family members sleeping on the first floor heard a blast and rushed to check what had happened. They alerted the fire force.

CHANGING EQUATIONS

AIADMK's 30 MLAs set to support TVK govt

FLOOR TEST TODAY

CHENNAI

The political situation in Tamil Nadu has turned dramatic ahead of Wednesday's floor test for the newly-elected TVK government led by Joseph Vijay.

The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) has split into two groups over extending support to the government.

The faction led by former chief minister and party general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami has directed party MLAs not to support the TVK government. Senior leader Agri Krishnamurthy warned that any MLA violating the party whip would face expulsion.

Meanwhile, another faction claiming the support of 30 MLAs has elected SP Velumani as the AIADMK Legislature Party leader. Leaders of the faction met the media on Tuesday after a meeting at former minister CV Shanmugam's residence. Shanmugam announced that the group would support the TVK government during the trust vote. The government has also secured the backing of the lone MLA of Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK), S Kamaraj, who was expelled from his party today.

Meanwhile, CM Vijay on Tuesday visited the office of AIADMK leader CV Shanmugam, and met SP Velumani and other party leaders as 30 rebel MLAs extended support to TVK.

Vijay has been holding meetings with leaders of supporting parties since Monday to consolidate support ahead of the floor test. With backing from the breakaway AIADMK faction and allies, the TVK government is expected to secure the support of around 150 MLAs in the Assembly.

Astrologer, who predicted Vijay's win, now CM's Special Officer

TVK chief Vijay's astrologer Rickey Radhan Pandit Vettrivel, who had predicted Vijay's electoral success even before the polls, has been appointed Officer on Special Duty to the CM on Tuesday.Public Department Secretariat on Tuesday issued the order in this effect. The noted astrologer has also worked with several prominent politicians from Tamil Nadu, including former CM late Jayalalithaa.Vijay was sworn-in as the TN CM on May 10 in a colourful ceremony, ushering in the first non-DMK, non-AIADMK government in the southern state in 60 years with promise of transparent governance and an assertion that he will be the sole power centre in the state.

QUICK READ

MVJ College hosts innovation expo featuring 250 student projects

CH News, Bengaluru

MVJ College of Engineering hosted its flagship academic event, Project Expo 2026, bringing together student innovators, industry leaders and academicians under the theme "Youth and Innovation: Building Modern India." Held at the Dr MV Jayaraman Auditorium, the expo featured projects from mechanical, computer science and electrical sciences streams. The event witnessed participation from 41 colleges across Karnataka and neighbouring states, with more than 250 projects showcased. After a multi-stage evaluation process, nearly 60 projects advanced to the final round. Speakers highlighted the importance of innovation, artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship and emerging technologies in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. A book titled Engineering Tomorrow: A Compendium of Youth Innovations was released during the inaugural session. The expo concluded with prize distribution carrying a total cash award of Rs 2 lakh.

Plantation drive lifts spirit at HBR Layout Theme Park

CH News, Bengaluru

Residents and community leaders participated in a plantation drive at the upcoming HBR Layout Theme Park as preparations continue for its grand inauguration. The initiative brought together local representatives, resident welfare associations, youth leaders and citizens, reflecting the growing community spirit in the Sarvagnanagar constituency. Organisers said the drive aimed to make the park greener and create a vibrant public space for residents. The project has been developed under the leadership of Karnataka Energy Minister KJ George. Once neglected, the area has now been transformed into a modern community landmark expected to serve as a recreational hub for families, children and local residents.

Biker killed, friend injured in airport road crash

CH News, Bengaluru

A 19-year-old biker died while his friend sustained serious injuries after their motorcycle lost control near Vidyanagar on the Bengaluru-Ballari Road late Monday night. The deceased was identified as Lakshay Kumar, a resident of HRBR Layout in Banasawadi. According to police, Lakshay was taking his friend on a late-night ride from the limits of the Chikkajala Traffic Police Station towards Devanahalli airport when the accident occurred. Lakshay died on the spot due to severe injuries, while the pillion rider was hospitalised. Police cited overspeeding, drunken driving and reckless late-night rides as frequent causes of accidents on the stretch.

HC orders compensation for Veerappan STF personnel

Court says eligible retired personnel cannot be denied promised reward compensation benefits anymore

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has directed the state government and the Forest Department to release compensation and reward amounts within three months to 72 personnel who were part of the Special Task Force (STF) involved in operations against forest brigand Veerappan.

A single-judge bench of Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum passed the order on April 21 while hearing a petition filed by retired forest guard S Srinivas and others who had participated in the long-running operation to capture Veerappan.

The court directed authorities to immediately distribute the reward amount to all beneficiaries listed as eligible under the government order dated July 8, 2005. The bench observed that the petitioners had actively participated in the STF mission and their names were included in the official records maintained by the government.

The court held that the petitioners were entitled to the same benefits as others who had already received compensation earlier and stated that denying them the reward amount would amount to continuing an irregularity that had already been corrected through judicial intervention.

Justice Magadum noted that once relief had been granted by the court in similar cases, it became the constitutional responsibility of the government and competent authorities to extend the same benefits to all similarly placed personnel without forcing each individual to approach the court separately.

The bench also referred to an earlier order passed by another division bench of the High Court on August 12, 2024, directing compensation to 17 other personnel involved in the operation. The court observed that there could be no discrimination between those beneficiaries and the present petitioners.

During earlier hearings, the High Court had expressed displeasure over the government's decision to restrict compensation to only a few personnel despite the fact that the anti-Veerappan operation had continued for several years and involved the efforts of numerous officers and staff members.

The court had further remarked that promises made by a sovereign government carry significance and should not be broken. It emphasised that Veerappan was not captured or neutralised by a handful of personnel in a single day, but through years of coordinated intelligence gathering, risky field operations and sustained efforts by many STF members who risked their lives during the mission.

The order is expected to benefit several retired personnel who had long awaited recognition and financial compensation for their role in one of the country's most extensive anti-bandit operations.

Auto driver booked for sexually harassing college student in broad daylight

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Police have registered a case against an autorickshaw driver for allegedly sexually harassing a 19-year-old college student on Promenade Road in Cleveland Town in east Bengaluru.

The complainant, a first-year BSc student residing in JC Nagar, approached police with her parents after the incident that reportedly occurred around 12.45 pm on May 7.

According to the complaint, the student was returning home after attending a sports meet at a PU college when she noticed a man seated inside a parked autorickshaw signalling towards her. After getting her attention, the accused allegedly unzipped his trousers, exposed himself and began performing obscene acts in public.

Police said the accused later drove ahead, stopped again and allegedly gestured at the student to enter his autorickshaw. Frightened by the incident, the student attempted to raise an alarm, following which the accused fled from the spot.

The student informed her parents about the incident two days later and subsequently lodged a complaint with police after counselling and support from family members.

A senior police officer said the complainant's father, employed in a private firm, accompanied her to the station to file the case.

Police have registered an FIR under Sections 74, 75 and 79 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita relating to assault or criminal force against a woman, sexual harassment and acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman.

Investigators have collected CCTV footage from the surrounding areas in an effort to trace the accused. However, officials said the autorickshaw registration number was not clearly visible in the footage.

"The CCTV visuals have been sent to the command centre for enhancement and technical assistance. Efforts are underway to identify and arrest the accused at the earliest," the officer said.

Police have urged citizens to immediately report incidents of harassment and assured that strict action would be taken against offenders involved in crimes against women.

Summer heat boosts ice apple trade

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Also called palm fruit, it is largely grown in Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh before reaching Karnataka markets during summer

With temperatures soaring across Karnataka, roadside stalls selling ice apples, locally known as taati ningu, have become increasingly popular in border districts, providing brisk business for traders arriving from neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

The seasonal fruit, also known as palm fruit, is widely consumed during summer for its cooling and hydrating properties. Districts such as Kolar have witnessed a sharp rise in demand as residents seek traditional remedies to cope with the intense heat.

Dozens of traders from Tamil Nadu travel across the state border every season to sell the fruit at temporary roadside stalls. The translucent jelly-like seeds inside the fruit are known for their watery texture and natural cooling effect.

Each fruit generally contains three seeds and is sold for around Rs 60. Vendors typically slice open the hard outer shell in front of customers before serving the edible portions.

Sreesha R said the fruit is not only refreshing during summer but also offers several health benefits.

"These fruits are rich in vitamins A, B and C. They also contain potassium and phosphorus. Arthritis patients are often advised to consume more of these fruits to help manage their condition," he said.

Traders say business has improved significantly this year due to the prolonged summer conditions. Many report selling out quickly during peak afternoon hours.

Siva Mani, who travels regularly to Kolar for seasonal trade, said the fruits are transported once every four days and distributed to retail points across the district.

"Normally, contractors purchase the crops for the entire season and later supply them to traders like us," he explained.

According to traders, nearly 40 vendors from Tamil Nadu are currently operating in Kolar alone, while similar numbers are active in KGF, Bangarpet and Mulbagal. The ice apple season usually begins in February and continues until early June, after which most migrant traders return to their native villages.

Local vendors in Kolar have also entered the business in recent years, though many admit that competing with experienced Tamil Nadu traders remains challenging due to their established supply networks and customer base.

As the summer heat continues, the humble palm fruit has once again emerged as one of the most sought-after seasonal refreshments across Karnataka's border regions.

Cantonment-Whitefield rail quadrupling deadline extended again to March 2027

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The long-pending rail quadrupling project between Bengaluru Cantonment and Whitefield has been delayed once again, with South Western Railway revising the completion deadline to March 2027.

The 19-km corridor project, sanctioned in 2018 at an estimated cost of Rs 492 crore, was aimed at easing congestion along one of Bengaluru's busiest suburban rail stretches connecting the central business district with the IT hub of Whitefield. However, repeated delays have pushed the revised project cost to nearly Rs 664.5 crore.

Railway officials said around 75 percent of the work has been completed so far. The first phase between Cantonment and Byappanahalli West Cabin, covering nearly 5 km, has already been commissioned.

The remaining 14-km stretch from Byappanahalli to Whitefield is expected to be completed by March 2027.

The corridor includes major

railway stations such as Bengaluru East railway station, Byappanahalli railway station, KR Pura railway station and Hoodi Halt railway station. At the time of approval, the Railways had estimated the project would benefit nearly 62,000 daily commuters. Officials cited multiple challenges for the delay, including utility shifting, restricted movement of heavy machinery within city limits and extensive yard remodelling works at Byappanahalli, KR Pura and Whitefield stations.

Another major hurdle has been the lack of adequate railway land for constructing retaining walls needed for the additional tracks.

Chief Public Relations Officer of SWR Manjunath Kanamadi said the upgraded corridor would significantly improve suburban mobility once completed.

Currently, 47 up and 47 down trains operate daily between Cantonment and Byappanahalli, while 40 up and 40 down services run between Byappanahalli and Whitefield. With the addition of a dedicated MEMU rake, officials said up to 14 more up and down services could be introduced daily, excluding maintenance blocks.

The average travel time between Cantonment and Whitefield is expected to be around 35 minutes. SWR also plans to extend suburban services towards Tumakuru, Hosur and Kuppam depending on passenger demand.

Meanwhile, redevelopment works at Whitefield railway station and KR Pura railway station are nearing completion, with new parking facilities, platform shelters, foot overbridges and passenger amenities being added as part of the corridor expansion project.

Karnataka government schools face 22% teacher shortage, says NITI Aayog report

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka is facing a major shortage of teachers in government schools, with nearly 22 percent of sanctioned posts lying vacant, according to a recent report by NITI Aayog.

The report, based on Project Approval Board meetings conducted in 2025, revealed that against the sanctioned strength of 1,78,935 teachers for 41,088 government primary schools across the state, there is a shortfall of 38,163 teachers.

According to the findings, nearly 77 percent of the vacancies are concentrated in primary and upper primary schools. Of the total shortage, 29,473 posts remain vacant at the elementary level, while 8,690 vacancies exist at the secondary level. Though Karnataka's overall shortage is lower compared to states such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, the report stressed the need for immediate policy interventions to strengthen school education systems.

The report noted that states

such as Kerala and Delhi reported no teacher vacancies, while Telangana and Chhattisgarh did not specify staffing figures. The Karnataka government had earlier announced plans to recruit 15,000 teachers, but the recruitment process is yet to begin.

Commissioner for School Education Vikas Kishor Suralkar said the process was delayed due to cabinet decisions regarding internal reservation policies.

"After incorporating the revised reservation framework and receiving clearance from the finance department, notifications will be issued. We hope to complete recruitment within 100 days and fill vacancies during the latter part of the academic year," he said.

Educationists, however, expressed concern over the delay and questioned the government's commitment to improving public education.

Maya Menon, founder-director of The Teacher Foundation, said teacher development and school quality have not received adequate attention in recent years.

"Committed and competent teachers are essential for improving schools. Professional development of teachers has taken a backseat. Exam scores alone do not reflect what children actually learn," she said.

Former Institute for Social and Economic Change faculty member AS Seetharamu attributed the problem partly to increasing dependence on guest and contract teachers under programmes such as Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. He said low investment in quality schooling and flexible temporary appointments have contributed to long-pending vacancies despite a large number of qualified candidates waiting for government teaching jobs across Karnataka.

BOON FOR CITY RESIDENTS

Congress readies B'luru-specific guarantees for GBA polls

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka government is set to unveil a series of Bengaluru-specific guarantees ahead of the upcoming Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections, signalling the Congress party's attempt to strengthen its political footing in the state capital through targeted urban welfare promises.

The proposed guarantees are expected to focus on key civic concerns such as mobility, waste management, water supply, housing, tax relief and urban infrastructure — issues that have dominated public discussions in Bengaluru over recent years.

The announcement is expected to come a week before the Government of Karnataka completes three years in office under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar said discussions had already taken place with Randeep Singh Surjewala, AICC General Secretary in charge of Karnataka, regarding the party's strategy for the GBA polls.

"We will announce major guarantees for Bengaluru city alone and share more details on May 13," Shivakumar told reporters.

The Congress government recently appointed chairpersons to guarantee implementation committees across all five GBA corporations, positions that had remained vacant for over two-and-a-half years. Political observers see the move as part of the party's larger effort to energise its organisational structure ahead of the elections scheduled for the latter half of June.

However, the upcoming civic polls have also triggered internal political debate within Congress circles. The State Election Commission has directed that elections be conducted between June 14 and June 24, even as the government awaits a decision from the Supreme Court on its request for an additional three months to complete administrative and legal processes linked to Bengaluru's civic restructuring.

A proposal to merge the five newly formed corporations into two larger divisions — North and South Bengaluru — has reportedly gained traction within sections of the ruling party.

Some Congress leaders fear that four of the five corporations could favour the BJP-JDS alliance, while Congress may retain influence only in the central region if smaller parties and independents split anti-incumbency votes.

Party insiders also cited concerns over ward delimitation and implementation of women's reservation as possible grounds for seeking additional time from the court.

According to senior Congress functionaries, consolidating the five corporations into two larger administrative units through an ordinance could help the party maintain stronger administrative and political control over Bengaluru while simplifying governance structures for the rapidly expanding metropolis.

MLA Vittal Katakadonda urges citizens to utilize welfare benefits properly

In Vijayapura, MLA Vittal Katakadonda distributed tricycles, highlighting benefits of the state government's five guarantee schemes

VIJAYAPURA

MLA Vittal Katakadonda highlighted the impact of the state government's five guarantee schemes, describing them as a strong support system for poor and vulnerable sections of society.

He was speaking after distributing motorized tricycles to 32 differently-abled beneficiaries under the MLA Local Area Development Fund programme. The event was jointly organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Department for Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens.

The MLA said the government has introduced several welfare-oriented schemes aimed at improving the living standards of economically weaker groups. He urged citizens to make full use of these benefits and stated that sincere implementation of public programmes always yields positive results.

Katakadonda also stressed that the Constitution provides several rights and facilities for differently-abled persons. He said the motorized tricycles would help beneficiaries in their daily mobility, enhance independence, and reduce dependence on others.

He added that the government is working to build confidence among differently-abled individuals by providing assistive equipment and financial support. He encouraged eligible beneficiaries to stay informed about available schemes and utilise them effectively.

On the occasion, officials noted that the beneficiaries are also supported through monthly pensions, free bus passes, and educational assistance, including support for higher education. They urged differently-abled persons to take advantage of these opportunities and actively participate in society through self-reliance.

Several officials and public representatives, including Sub-Divisional Officer Gurunath Dadde and Guarantee Schemes Committee members, were present at the programme. The event highlighted the government's continued focus on welfare delivery and inclusive development initiatives in the region.

QUICK READ

Hulsur police launch probe into baby death case

BIDAR

Panic and shock spread among residents after the body of a newborn male baby was found in a roadside drain near Basaveshwar Circle in Gadigaudgaon village in Hulsur taluk of Bidar district. Local resident Jaihind Metre noticed the infant and immediately informed villagers, who then alerted the Hulsur Police Station. Police rushed to the spot and shifted the body to the Community Health Centre for postmortem examination. Doctors suspected the baby was prematurely delivered and then abandoned to conceal the birth. The incident has sparked outrage in the village, with residents demanding strict action. A complaint has been filed and police have registered a case, with further investigation underway.

Wall collapse in Yadgir village claims 8-year-old girl

YADGIR

An 8-year-old girl died after a house wall collapsed during heavy rain and strong winds in Tumkur village of Vadagera taluk in Yadgir district. The deceased has been identified as Akshata, daughter of Siddappa. Officials said the kitchen wall of the house gave way due to intense rainfall and gusty winds. At the time of the incident, children were playing in the courtyard nearby. Akshata was trapped under the debris and died on the spot. Two other children sustained injuries and were shifted to Yadgir YIIMS Hospital for treatment. Senior officials visited the site and inspected the damage. A case has been registered at Vadagera Police Station and further assessment is underway.

State-level Tatvapada essay competition announced

VIJAYAPURA

The Department of Kannada and Culture in Vijayapura has issued a warning to artists and cultural organisations against fraudulent calls demanding money in exchange for alleged government grants. Officials said scammers are falsely claiming that sanctioned grants will be credited only after advance payments are made through PhonePe or other online platforms. In a press release, the Assistant Director clarified that the department follows strict official procedures for all grants and never asks beneficiaries to make payments or share money to receive funds. Artists have been urged not to trust such calls or fall prey to financial fraud. They are also advised to immediately report such incidents to the nearest police station.

Nav Karnataka group leads protest in Kalaburagi ZP

In Kalaburagi, activists protested alleged misuse of old age home grants, demanding inquiry, accountability, and strict action against those involved.

KALABURAGI

Members of various organisations staged a protest in front of the Zilla Panchayat office, demanding a probe into alleged misuse of government funds meant for an old age home.

The protestors alleged that nearly ₹30 lakh in grants allocated for "Vijayalakshmi Vruddhashrama" in Bhavani Nagar of Sedam town was misused. They submitted a memorandum to the Chief Executive Officer seeking a detailed investigation and strict legal action against those responsible.

The agitation was led by organisations including the Nav Karnataka MRW-VRW and UDW Differently-Abled Honorarium Workers' Association. Protesters claimed that fake documents were used to obtain government grants in the name of senior citizens, while residents of the old age home were allegedly deprived of basic facilities. They termed the issue a violation of human rights.

They also demanded an inquiry into the role of Ningamma Kattimani, who is reportedly associated with the organisation running the facility. Protesters urged authorities to cancel her membership if her involvement in the alleged irregularities is proven.

Further allegations were raised against Lakshmibai Sharanappa, with claims that she continued in service after allegedly manipulating her date of birth. The organisations demanded a medical examination to verify her age and appropriate disciplinary action if wrongdoing is confirmed.

The memorandum warned that if swift action is not taken, the agitation would be intensified, including plans to lay siege to the office of the district in-charge minister.

Activists including Gundesh M. Shivanur, Udaykumar S. Belagundi, Ambaji P. Meti, and others participated in the protest. The incident has triggered calls for stricter monitoring of welfare grant utilisation in the region.

Businessman claims false involvement in rice smuggling case

VIJAYAPURA

A businessman has sought a detailed investigation into an alleged illegal ration rice smuggling network, claiming that his name has been wrongly linked to the racket.

Madivalaiah Hiremath, a resident of Shivashakti Nagar in Vijayapura city, submitted a complaint to the authorities alleging large-scale diversion of government-supplied ration rice meant for welfare beneficiaries. He claimed that the rice was being illegally collected, transported, and sold in the black market across Vijayapura and neighbouring districts.

According to the complaint, officials from the Food Department recently seized a vehicle allegedly involved in transporting ration rice illegally near the Vijayapura–Manguli road. Hiremath stated that some individuals involved in the operation were misusing his name during transportation and financial dealings without his knowledge or consent.

He further alleged that when he confronted those involved, they initially apologised and admitted to running an illegal network. However, he claimed that later a false police complaint was filed against him after he raised objections and reported the matter to social activists and authorities.The complainant also stated that he has secured anticipatory bail from the court and possesses phone call recordings that, according to him, support his version of events. He has requested authorities to examine bank transactions, digital payments, phone records, and income sources of those suspected to be involved in the alleged smuggling network.

Hiremath urged officials to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation to expose any misuse of ration rice intended for poor families under government welfare schemes.

Yadgir police team locates missing toddler swiftly

YADGIR

A two-and-a-half-year-old girl who went missing while playing outside her home was safely traced within a few hours, thanks to quick coordination between the public and police personnel.

The child, identified as Ayesha, daughter of Sagir and Sama Fatima originally from Uttar Pradesh, lives in Lodge Galli locality of Yadgir city. The incident occurred when the child's father had left for work and her mother had briefly gone to a neighbouring house. During this time, the toddler reportedly wandered away while playing outside the house.

It is believed that the child walked towards the railway station area, where she was noticed alone and crying. Alert auto drivers in the locality approached her, comforted her, and attempted to identify her family details. They then shifted her safely to the bus stand area and informed the police. Personnel from the Akka Police Team, including constable Sunita Chavhan and driver Anilkumar, immediately took custody of the child. The team quickly circulated the child's photograph through social media platforms and alerted nearby police stations to assist in locating her parents.

At the same time, the anxious family had also approached the Yadgir City Police Station and reported the missing child. Coordinated efforts between the police and public helped establish the child's identity within a short span of time.

The child was later handed over to the District Child Welfare Committee for verification procedures. After completing the necessary formalities, authorities safely reunited the child with her parents at the city police station in the afternoon.

Citizens have widely appreciated the swift response of the police and the timely intervention of auto drivers and local residents.

Mohammed Ikramulla Shariff takes charge as Kalaburagi DC

KALABURAGI

In Kalaburagi, 2016-batch IAS officer Mohammed Ikramulla Shariff has officially assumed charge as the new Deputy Commissioner of the district. The formal handover ceremony was held at the Deputy Commissioner's office, where outgoing DC Fouzia Taranum welcomed him with a bouquet and handed over responsibilities. Fouzia Taranum has been appointed as Commissioner of the Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department. During her nearly two-and-a-half-year tenure in Kalaburagi, she oversaw several key developmental initiatives across the district.

Prior to his posting as Deputy Commissioner, Mohammed Ikramulla Shariff served as Joint Director in the Finance Department (Budget and Resources). As per the government order, he will continue in his new role until further instructions.

After taking charge, the new DC stated that the administration will focus on a people-friendly governance model with priority on addressing public grievances effectively. He expressed happiness at being posted to the Kalyana Karnataka region and said that strengthening healthcare and education would be key focus areas.

Leaders allege government inaction on drinking water crisis

KALABURAGI

Leaders and activists of the Communist Party of India staged a protest in front of the municipal corporation office, demanding immediate action to resolve the worsening drinking water crisis in the district during peak summer.

The protest was organised as part of a statewide call given by the Communist Party of India, highlighting acute water shortages affecting urban areas, taluk headquarters, and rural regions. Demonstrations were also held in several taluk centres across the district.

CPI district secretary Maheshkumar Rathod alleged that despite soaring temperatures, citizens are forced to struggle daily for drinking water. He claimed that in many areas, the available water is hard and unfit for consumption, while the administration has remained largely unresponsive to public suffering.

He urged officials to step out of air-conditioned offices and directly address the hardships faced by people on the ground. CPI leader Prabhudev Yalasangi also expressed concern over labourers working under extreme heat without access to safe drinking water, resulting in health issues and hospital admissions.

The protest also highlighted broader civic concerns. CPI district treasurer Bhimashankar Madiyal pointed to additional issues such as poor road conditions, inadequate healthcare facilities, and irregular electricity supply, calling for urgent government intervention. CPI assistant secretary Padmavati Patil also participated in the protest.

During the agitation, party workers raised slogans and displayed empty pots symbolising the scarcity of water. They demanded immediate provision of clean and safe drinking water, including chilled water facilities in public places, markets, and areas frequented by workers and students.

Animal lovers demand action over dog poisoning

VIJAYAPURA

Public outrage has erupted after unidentified miscreants allegedly poisoned stray dogs in the Shastri Nagar locality, resulting in the death of one animal and critical condition of two others.

The incident reportedly occurred just days after a stray dog attack on a three-year-old child in Rajkumar Layout had triggered public protests demanding stricter action from civic authorities to control the stray dog population.

Following the earlier incident, the Vijayapura City Corporation had initiated plans for sterilisation and relocation of stray dogs. However, before these measures could be implemented, unknown individuals allegedly mixed poison into food and fed it to stray dogs in Shastri Nagar.

Animal lovers and residents strongly condemned the act, calling it inhumane. One dog died on the spot, while two others were shifted to a veterinary hospital, where doctors said their condition remains critical. Reports suggest that up to six stray dogs may have been affected.

Local residents noted that no dog attacks had been reported in the Shastri Nagar area and questioned the motive behind the poisoning. Some alleged that the act could be linked to attempts to create fear in the locality or facilitate illegal activities such as theft.

Tension further escalated when animal welfare activists accused municipal workers of attempting to remove injured dogs in sacks while they were still alive, sparking additional anger among residents.

The incident has intensified the ongoing debate in Vijayapura over stray dog management, with conflicting concerns from residents about public safety and from animal rights activists about cruelty against animals.

Citizens have urged the district administration and civic body to adopt scientific, humane methods for stray dog control and to initiate strict legal action against those responsible for the alleged poisoning.

HEALTH INCENTIVE PROTEST

ASHA workers raise concerns over pending health scheme payments

RAICHUR

Members of the Karnataka State Joint ASHA Workers Association staged a protest at Tipu Sultan Park demanding immediate release of pending honorarium and central incentive payments.

The protestors said that ASHA workers have not received dues under various health programmes, including TB, TBI, and NCD schemes. They urged the government to clear all pending payments without further delay and restore nine services that they claimed were deactivated in the ASHA Nidhi software system.

The association also demanded the withdrawal of the "Samasta" mobile application used for maintaining records, stating that it has created operational difficulties for workers in the field.

They further sought retirement benefits for ASHA workers and continuation of ASHA facilitators with proper salary structures. One of the key demands included fixing a minimum monthly honorarium of ₹10,000 for all ASHA workers, along with an additional ₹1,000 increment in the existing payment structure. Protesters said the current remuneration is insufficient considering their workload and responsibilities in public health services.Speakers at the protest accused authorities of delaying payments and ignoring repeated appeals from field workers.

They stressed that ASHA workers play a crucial role in rural healthcare delivery and should be treated with dignity and financial security.

Several workers, including Gouramma Hosamani, Shobha, Eeramma Devadurga, Prabhavati, Mallamma Lavina, Devamma Sujatha, and others, participated in the demonstration.

QUICK READ

Karnataka invites applications for Arivu Education Loan

Haveri

The Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation has invited applications for the Arivu Educational Loan Facility for the year 2026–27. The scheme is meant for minority students selected through CET or NEET for professional courses such as Medical, BDS, BE, BTech, Agriculture, Pharmacy and Veterinary Science. Eligible communities include Muslim, Jain, Sikh, Buddhist and Anglo Indian students (excluding Christian community). Students must apply online before May 30 through the official website and submit a hard copy to the Haveri district office. Officials said the scheme supports higher education for financially weak students. For details, contact 08375-324114.

Lokayukta to receive public complaints in Ponnapet

Madikeri

Karnataka Lokayukta officials will receive public complaint applications on May 13 from 11 am to 1 pm at Ponnapet Taluk Office Hall in Kodagu district. Complaints can be filed against government officials and employees for delays in official work and other public inconvenience caused in government offices. Authorities said applications must be submitted in prescribed format along with notarized affidavit. The Lokayukta department requested citizens to make use of the opportunity to address corruption and administrative issues. For further information, people can contact Madikeri Lokayukta Police Office at 08272-295297.

Public objections invited over land purchase scheme

Ballari

Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation has proposed to purchase land under the Land Ownership Scheme 2025–26 for landless Scheduled Tribe women agricultural workers in Ballari district. As part of the process, a landowner from Ballari taluk has offered his property for sale, and the public has been invited to raise objections if any. The land is located in Survey No. 4/2 of Kammarachedu village, Rupanagudi hobli, covering 7 acres 58 guntas. Objections must be submitted in writing to the district office before May 30 during working hours. Officials said late submissions will not be accepted.

Yaduveer Wadiyar urges protection of Mysuru heritage sites

Yaduveer urged preserving Mysuru markets, suggested new markets, and requested funds be redirected to restoration projects

MYSURU

BJP MP Yaduveer Wadiyar has urged the Karnataka government to protect Mysuru's Devaraja Market and Lansdowne Building following a recent Supreme Court direction. He said the court order is welcome and reflects the need to preserve heritage structures instead of demolishing them. He visited Devaraja Market after traders invited him and spoke to the media about conservation efforts. He recalled that local people have been demanding protection of the historic market since 2005 instead of demolition.

He urged the state government not to proceed with demolition appeals and instead focus on conservation work. He said funds planned for rebuilding could be used for restoration of both heritage structures in Mysuru. Traders at Devaraja Market have also expressed willingness to cooperate by adjusting their spaces for renovation work.

Yaduveer said many countries around the world have successfully preserved old markets while upgrading facilities. He added that it is not

difficult to preserve such structures if there is strong political will. He also suggested developing additional markets in different parts of Mysuru as the city continues to grow. He said this approach can balance heritage conservation with modern urban needs and reduce pressure on central markets. Local traders welcomed his visit and expressed hope that the government will follow the Supreme Court direction. Yaduveer also wrote to the Chief Minister requesting that funds meant for demolition be redirected to restoration projects.

The issue has sparked long standing debate in Mysuru between redevelopment plans and heritage conservation supporters. He said the Supreme Court order gives a clear opportunity to protect the city's cultural identity for future generations. He urged the government to act quickly and ensure that both buildings are restored with proper planning and expert guidance while maintaining their original design and historical value.

According to him, heritage protection will strengthen Mysuru's identity as a cultural city and support tourism growth, while also preserving history in a rapidly developing urban environment, ensuring that future generations can experience the city's traditional architecture and understand its historical importance clearly and meaningfully for all.

Indi MLA launches strong attack on Modi

VIJAYAPURA

Indi MLA Yashwanthrayagouda Patil on Tuesday launched sharp criticism against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging misuse of constitutional institutions and questioning Centre's governance style.

Addressing reporters in Vijayapura, he said country was witnessing an "undeclared Emergency" and claimed agencies like Income Tax Department and Enforcement Directorate were misused for political purposes. He questioned how leaders unable to govern effectively could claim status of "Vishwaguru" or global leader.

He said leaders must speak with responsibility and warned misuse of institutions could harm nation's future. He also criticised demonetisation, calling it rushed and poorly planned decision affecting public.

He alleged Prime Minister's Office should not be election-centric and said Election Commission has become ineffective. Referring to PM's recent remarks, he said they were ridiculed and created insecurity among citizens. He added comments on political rivalry and spending were inappropriate for Prime Minister. He said such statements were causing fear among people. On Karnataka cabinet expansion, he said demand was raised by senior leaders in ruling party. He noted limited time remained in government tenure and questioned relevance of new ministerial posts.

Patil said cabinet expansion demand came from senior leaders, questioned its relevance, denied Delhi talks, and sparked political debate in Vijayapura

He clarified his visit to New Delhi was for development issues, not cabinet talks. He said political discussions often overshadow development work in public discourse.

Overall the MLA's remarks have triggered political discussion in Vijayapura with supporters backing his views while opposition leaders are expected to respond in coming days.

The issue is likely to continue drawing attention as both local and national political debates intensify ahead of upcoming administrative discussions and public meetings in the district.

Mandya to honor employees with service awards ceremony

MANDYA

Mandya district administration will celebrate State Government Employees Day 2026 along with district level best service award ceremonies for 2024, 2025 and 2026 on May 13 at Dr B R Ambedkar Bhavan under the chairmanship of the district in-charge minister and agriculture minister. The event will recognize officers and staff selected for their performance, efficiency and service across departments in Mandya district. Selections were made by the district level committee based on outstanding work in various government offices. Award lists include employees from revenue, health, education, food, panchayat and animal husbandry departments. Officials said the recognition aims to encourage public service dedication and improve administrative efficiency in the district.

Winners from 2024, 2025 and 2026 will be felicitated during the programme with certificates and appreciation. District officials stated that the event highlights government commitment to rewarding honest and efficient employees. They added that such programmes help boost morale and inspire better service among staff members. Citizens were informed that selected employees have contributed significantly to public welfare and development activities across Mandya district over the years. Arrangements have been made by the district administration for smooth conduct of the ceremony at the venue.

Mahana said committee will meet in Delhi, study legislature reforms, adapt to rapid generational change and modern systems

Lok Sabha forms committee for legislative uniformity

MYSURU

A committee comprising Speakers of Legislative Assemblies from six states has been constituted by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha to bring uniformity in the procedures and conduct of all State Legislative Assemblies, said committee chairman and Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana.

Speaking to media representatives after the committee's first meeting held here on Tuesday, he said the committee includes the Speakers of the Legislative Assemblies of Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Delhi. The committee would hold discussions on improving the policies, rules and regulations followed in various State Legislatures and prepare a report. Suggestions from Speakers of other states would also be taken into consideration. The committee will submit its report to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

Mahana said the first meeting was held today, and the next meeting would be conducted in Delhi within one-and-a-half months. The committee has been given six months to submit its report. The rules and procedures of legislatures were framed nearly 40 years ago. Earlier, generational changes occurred once in 25 to 30 years, but today generations are changing within five years. In this context, the committee is working towards bringing uniformity by incorporating the best suggestions from all states. Discussions are also focusing on technological advancements, infrastructure, financial systems and public welfare.

Karnataka Legislative Assembly Speaker U. T. Khader said that Maharaja Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar had convened a representative assembly in Mysuru in 1891. In remembrance of this historic event, the committee's first meeting was held in Mysuru, he said.

Committee members present at the press conference included Nagaland Legislative Assembly Speaker Sharingain Longkumer, Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania, and Delhi Legislative Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta.

SP Baladandi flags off 'Nasha Mukta Mysuru' marathon

MYSURU

Mysuru District Superintendent of Police Mallikarjun Baladandi inaugurated the 'Nasha Mukta Mysuru' marathon organized by JSS Hospital, JSS Nursing College and JSS School of Nursing as part of International Nurses Day celebrations.

More than 1,000 participants, including students and professors from various nursing colleges, took part in the marathon, which began in front of Kote Anjaneya Swamy Temple.

The marathon passed through the City Bus Stand, Sayyaji Rao Road, Basaveshawara Circle, Nilgiri Road and Albert Victor Road before concluding at the starting point near the temple. Speaking on the occasion, SP Mallikarjun Baladandi said that in recent times, not only Mysuru but many parts of the country have witnessed youth falling prey to substance abuse. Many young people struggle to come out of addiction once trapped.

In this context, he appreciated the organization of the awareness marathon against narcotic substances as part of International Nurses Day. Cyclist and pediatric dentist at JSS Hospital Dr. Brinda Suhas Godhi said that she began running in her 40s to maintain fitness. To give greater meaning to life, she started cycling in 2017. Initially, she took up small cycling expeditions, but now she has completed a cycling journey from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, covering 3,700 kilometres in 22 days," she said.

Expensive Miyazaki Mango steals show at fair

KOPPAL

The Horticulture Department launched its landmark 10th annual Mango Fair, marking a decade of connecting local farmers directly with fruit lovers. Running until May 22 at the Joint Director's office, this year's exhibition is bigger than ever, featuring over 100 farmer stalls and a stunning 200 varieties of the "king of fruits." The star attraction is the world-renowned Miyazaki mango. While this Japanese variety can cost ₹2.5 lakh per kilogram globally, Koppal farmers are selling their locally grown harvest for ₹2,500 to ₹3,000 per kilo.

NSS camp helps build healthy society: Dr Sheshappa

MANGALURU

Dr Sheshappa, NSS coordinator of Mangalore University, said the National Service Scheme helps in building a healthy society and developing student personality.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a seven-day NSS special camp organized by Government First Grade College, Vamadapadavu in Acharipalke village.

He said students should use the camp as an opportunity for service, learning and awareness activities in rural areas. He added that NSS promotes health awareness, environmental protection, social service and community responsibility.

He advised students to maintain discipline, cleanliness and good habits during the camp. He also stressed water conservation, hospitality, report writing, communication skills and cultural activities with social messages.

College principal Dr Mahesh K B said NSS should be a way of life. He encouraged students to actively participate in all activities.

He also said digital literacy awareness in villages is important today.

Faculty members, committee members, school representatives and local leaders attended the programme.

Camp officer Dr Puttalakshmamma welcomed the gathering. IQAC coordinator Dr Vishal Pinto gave the introduction. Dr Madhu A S proposed the vote of thanks.

Organisers said the camp aims to develop leadership skills among students while serving rural communities.

Students will take part in health awareness drives, cleanliness activities and educational outreach programmes during the camp days.

HERITAGE AT CROSSROADS

Proposed underpass near Kukkarahalli sparks concern

MYSURU

The proposed underpass near the picturesque Kukkarahalli Tank, planned jointly by the state government and Railways to ease congestion at the railway level crossing, has triggered serious concern among heritage lovers and environmentalists in Mysuru. Ironically, the authorities of the historic University of Mysore — whose land and surroundings will be directly impacted — have reportedly not been taken into confidence regarding the ambitious project. The junction where the underpass is proposed lies amidst some of Mysuru's most iconic landmarks — the sprawling Maharaja Sports Ground, the majestic Crawford Hall, the University administration block, and the serene Kukkarahalli Lake. The lush green canopy surrounding these heritage structures has long been regarded as one of the city's finest visual treasures. However, sources reveal that several trees standing on university property may have to be axed for the construction work. What has surprised many is the silence surrounding the consultation process. Neither the Vice-Chancellor nor the Registrar of the University has reportedly been approached for suggestions or approval before moving ahead with the project proposal.

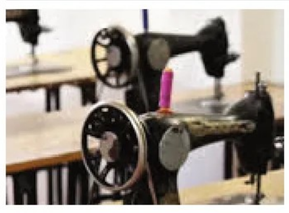
-Prof N.K.Loknath, vice-chancellor, UoM, Mysore "I don't know anything about the construction of a railway underpass near the Kukkarahalli junction. No officer has met me so far to explain about the project. I fear the beauty of the century old Crawford Hall will go if the underpass is constructed. Besides, the University Sports Ground is the only well-equipped ground in the entire Mysuru.

A Threat to Heritage and Ecology

Established in 1916, the University of Mysore is not merely an educational institution but a cultural and architectural symbol of Karnataka's academic legacy. Heritage activists fear that the construction of the underpass could irreversibly damage the visual elegance and ecological charm of the entire stretch.

This is not the first instance where developmental works have allegedly overlooked heritage sensitivity. A few years ago, the construction of a cement overhead water tank near the historic Oriental Research Institute drew widespread criticism from conservationists. Despite public objections and the availability of alternative locations, the project went ahead, leaving many disappointed.

QUICK READ



Free tailoring training offered for Bhovi youth

CH NEWS, Chitradurga Karnataka Bhovi Development Corporation has invited applications for free tailoring training and sewing machine distribution for unemployed youth from the Bhovi community in Chitradurga district. The scheme aims to improve self-employment opportunities and support financial independence among Scheduled Caste youth. Eligible applicants must be between 18 and 50 years of age. Interested candidates can collect application forms from the district office and submit completed forms with required documents before May 18. Officials said the training will help beneficiaries start their own livelihood. For details, applicants may contact the district office or call 9448154584 for guidance and assistance regarding the scheme benefits.

Udupi announces live interview recruitment drive

CH NEWS, Udupi
A live interview session for various job vacancies will be held on May 15 at 10:30 am at Abharana Motors Private Limited in Nittur, Udupi. Officials said candidates who have completed SSLC, PUC, ITI, Diploma or degree courses are eligible to attend the interview. Applicants must bring their mark sheets, updated resume or CV, and a copy of Aadhaar card. The District Employment Exchange Office stated that the drive aims to provide local job opportunities to educated youth. For more details, candidates can contact 8105618291, 9945856670 or 9901472710 at the Udupi Employment Exchange Office, Manipal

Helpline launched to solve drinking water issues

CH NEWS, Udupi
A district-level helpline has been set up to address drinking water supply problems in rural areas of Udupi. Officials said people can report any disruption in water supply by calling 8217075359 for quick action and resolution. The Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department stated that the helpline aims to ensure uninterrupted water supply and timely response to complaints from villages. Residents have been requested to make use of the service and immediately inform authorities if they face shortages or pipeline issues.

District disaster meeting reviews heavy rainfall risks

Deputy Commissioner directed officials to coordinate during emergencies, conduct MLA-led taluk meetings, and raise awareness in vulnerable areas

MADIKERI

District officials in Kodagu have started preparations ahead of the monsoon season after warnings of possible heavy rainfall in June. Deputy Commissioner S. J. Somashekhar chaired a District Disaster Management Authority meeting on Tuesday and directed officers to stay alert and complete safety arrangements in advance.

Officials said rainfall in the district has remained below normal since January. However weather experts have warned that sudden and intense rain may hit the region during the coming weeks. Authorities have already identified flood-prone and landslide-sensitive areas across the district.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed nodal officers tahsildars engineers police officials and local bodies to work together during emergencies.

He also asked taluk-level teams to hold meetings under the leadership of local MLAs and spread awareness among residents living in risky areas.

A report on the condition of schools colleges and government buildings has also been ordered. District authorities said helpline centres will function round the clock during the rainy season with staff working in three shifts. Care centres with drinking water electricity and toilet facilities are also being prepared for people who may need evacuation.

Officials from departments including police forest health electricity and public works attended the meeting and discussed precautionary measures.

Superintendent of Police Bindumani said special teams have already been formed and emergency equipment like life jackets torches and gumboots will be kept ready.

Health officials were instructed to stock medicines and take steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases during the rains. Authorities also warned people not to spread false information through social media and said only official updates should be trusted.

District officials said protecting human life livestock and public property remains their highest priority as Kodagu prepares for the approaching monsoon season.

Officials also said roadside trees damaged electric poles and blocked drains will be cleared before heavy rain begins.

Volunteers from NCC NSS Red Cross groups and former servicemen may assist rescue operations if emergencies arise.

Authorities requested residents living near rivers and hillsides to remain cautious and immediately report signs of flooding landslides or damaged roads to local officials.

Congress leader raises concern over farmer hardships

KOLAR

Congress Kisan Unit district president Seethosur Murali Gowda has demanded immediate compensation for farmers who suffered crop losses due to recent unseasonal rains and hailstorms in Kolar district. In a press statement issued on Monday, he urged the district administration and Horticulture Department to visit affected areas, conduct a proper survey and release relief funds without delay.

He said mango and vegetable crops spread across thousands of acres in Srinivaspur, KGF, Mulbagal and nearby regions were badly damaged due to unexpected rain and hailstorms. Farmers who were already stru ggling with rising temperatures, labour costs, fertilizer pric es and maintenance expenses are now facing additional hardship because of the crop destruction.

Murali Gowda said mango, which is the main commercial crop of the district, has already recorded reduced yield this season because of extreme heat. The recent rains have worsened the situation and caused major financial losses to growers. He appealed to the government to provide support before farmers fall into deeper distress.

He also urged the Horticulture Department and the State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation to jointly conduct a scientific study of the crop damage and submit a detailed report to the government for compensation approval. The Congress lea der said many farmers had invested heavily and were expecting a good harvest after months of hard work. However, the sudden weather changes have shattered their hopes and left them worried about their future. He warned that continued rainfall could lead to further crop destruction and make farming even more difficult in the coming days. He demanded that the state government act quickly and provide suitable compensation to all affected farmers in Kolar district without delay to help them recover from the severe losses suffered this season.

Record revenue for Kollur Mookambika temple in 2025-26

KOLLUR

Kollur Mookambika Temple has registered a record income of Rs 84 crore during the 2025-26 financial year, excluding fixed deposits and savings. Temple authorities said the revenue has increased by nearly Rs 13 crore compared to the previous year, reflecting a steady rise in the number of devotees and offerings made at the shrine.

According to the temple administration, the temple had earned Rs 68.23 crore during 2023-24, while the net savings stood at Rs 26.59 crore and fixed deposits at Rs 168.48 crore. In 2024-25, the income increased to Rs 71.93 crore, with net savings of Rs 31.35 crore and fixed deposits touching Rs 200.83 crore.

For the current financial year 2025-26, the temple has recorded an income of Rs 84 crore, while net savings have reached Rs 32.75 crore. The temple's fixed deposits have now increased to Rs 229.82 crore, showcasing the strong financial growth of the shrine. Temple authorities said major sources of revenue include special seva offerings, hundi collections, donations from devotees, choultry collections and rental income from temple-owned buildings.

The administration noted that the temple has been witnessing consistent growth in annual income year after year, with this year marking the highest-ever collection in its history. Devotees also contribute gold and silver ornaments as part of vows and offerings.

Donations are additionally made for Tulabhara, Chandika Yaga and Anna Dasoha services conducted at the temple. The temple's accommodation facilities have also emerged as a significant source of revenue.

Authorities revealed that the government has now granted approval for the construction of a new guest house to cater to the increasing number of pilgrims visiting the temple.

Traffic congestion worsens at Thokkottu junction despite road expansion

ULLAL

The traffic congestion at Thokkottu Junction on National Highway 66 continues to trouble commuters despite crores of rupees being spent on road development works. Though the stretch from Thokkottu to Chembugudde has been widened into a four-lane road at an estimated cost of nearly Rs 20 crore, motorists say traffic jams have only worsened over the years.

Thokkottu junction is considered the gateway connecting Mangaluru, Kerala and several rural parts of Ullal taluk. The area has witnessed rapid growth in the education, medical, industrial and IT sectors, resulting in a steep rise in vehicle movement. The 4.5-km stretch between Thokkottu and Natekal alone houses multiple hospitals and educational institutions, increasing daily traffic density. Residents and commuters complain that severe congestion is witnessed especially during morning and evening peak hours, causing hardships to office-goers, students and women commuters.

Locals allege that the unscientific flyover construction is the main reason behind the persistent problem. Narrow service roads, roadside parking near commercial complexes, autorickshaws waiting for passengers near junction turns and buses halting at the junction are adding to the chaos. Another major issue raised by commuters is the closure of the Bhatnagar-Ullal cross road connected to the flyover. Due to this, vehicles travelling from Ullal towards Kerala are forced to pass through Thokkottu junction, worsening congestion further. Residents have urged authorities to widen the service roads, regulate bus stops and streamline autorickshaw parking.

However, commuters claim that despite the issue persisting for years, neither elected representatives nor highway authorities have taken effective steps to resolve the problem.

Farmers begin pre-monsoon preparations for paddy cultivation

BAJPE

Even before the arrival of the southwest monsoon, farmers in Bajpe and surrounding areas have started preparations for the upcoming paddy cultivation season. Expecting timely rains by early June, several large landholders and farmers cultivating fallow land have already begun ploughing their fields using tractors.

The sound of tractors has become common in Bajpe and Kompadavu as farmers engage in the traditional practice of "dry soil ploughing" before the first monsoon showers. Earlier, farmers would wait for one or two pre-monsoon rains in May before starting cultivation activities. However, with easy availability of tractors, many have now started an initial round of ploughing in advance.

Farmers say pre-monsoon ploughing helps turn over the soil and expose harmful insects and pests to sunlight, reducing the chances of crop damage during the paddy season. In many places, birds such as egrets flock to freshly ploughed fields to feed on insects and worms.

Preparations are particularly active in Kompadavu, where cultivation is being resumed in several fallow fields this year. Farmers say another round of ploughing and soil levelling will be carried out once proper rains begin, followed by sowing activities. Seedbed preparations in low-lying fields have also commenced.

Alongside ploughing, farmers are continuing the traditional "Sudumannu" practice, where weeds, dried leaves, grass and agricultural waste.

Demand grows for direct KSRTC bus service between Gangolli and Byndoor

GANGOLLI

Residents of Gangolli have urged authorities to introduce direct KSRTC bus services to Byndoor, citing severe inconvenience faced by students, fishermen and daily commuters due to the absence of proper transport connectivity.

Gangolli, one of the major fishing harbour regions in the district, witnesses heavy daily movement of people travelling to Byndoor for education, employment and business purposes. A large number of students from Byndoor attend schools and colleges in Gangolli, while fishermen, traders, government employees and private sector workers commute regularly between the two towns.

However, residents complain that there is currently no direct government or private bus service operating between Gangolli and Byndoor. Commuters are forced to depend on multiple buses to complete the journey, leading to delays and hardship.

Locals said that private buses which once operated on the route had stopped services several years ago. At present, passengers travelling from Byndoor to Gangolli must first get down at Trasi Junction and board another bus to reach their destination.Students and daily wage workers say the lack of direct transport often causes delays in reaching schools, colleges and workplaces on time. Several educational institutions have already submitted petitions to transport department officials and elected representatives seeking immediate restoration of bus services.

Illegal activity reported in unused government housing area

MANGALURU

Several government residential quarters located near Lalbagh in Mangaluru have fallen into severe neglect, raising safety and security concerns among local residents. Built years ago to accommodate government officers and employees, many of the quarters are now lying abandoned and have reportedly become hotspots for illegal and anti-social activities.

The residential complex includes houses belonging to various government departments. While only a handful of quarters remain occupied, more than 12 houses are currently abandoned and are no longer fit for habitation.

Residents say overgrown grass and bushes have engulfed the premises, while fallen coconut trees have damaged rooftops. Several buildings have developed cracks in the walls, and broken doors and windows have made the abandoned structures easily accessible to trespassers.

Locals allege that the deserted quarters have become centres for immoral activities even during daytime hours.

A recent incident involving a woman labourer being allegedly lured into one of the abandoned houses under the pretext of cleaning work and misbehaved with has further heightened concern in the area.

Empty liquor and soda bottles have also reportedly been found inside the premises.

Residents say the abandoned buildings have additionally become breeding grounds for snakes and scorpions, creating fear among families still residing nearby.

Ironically, the quarters are situated adjacent to the Officers' Club, frequently visited by senior district officials. Locals question why authorities have failed to act despite the prime location and deteriorating condition of the valuable government property.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Raju K said the issue would be reviewed and appropriate action taken after inspection.

MANGO ADULTERATION ISSUE

Demand raised for crackdown on chemical mango sales

KOPPAL

Several organisations under the Alliance of Popular Organisations have urged the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to take strict action against the sale of fruits ripened using harmful chemicals, especially mangoes, in markets across Karnataka. A petition was submitted through the District Collector Suresh B Itnal on Tuesday.

Activists said the mango season has begun, but many traders are using dangerous chemicals like calcium carbide to artificially ripen fruits. They alleged that

despite awareness among officials, no strong action is being taken against such practices.

They accused authorities of negligence and said officials are drawing salaries from public taxes but failing to protect citizens' health. The petition demanded surprise inspections in fruit markets and strict legal action against violators.

The organisations warned that consuming chemically ripened fruits can cause serious health problems including cancer, nerve damage and digestive disorders. They said the Food Safety Department and local administration must act immediately instead of ignoring the issue.The petition demanded immediate spot checks in all major markets, seizure of chemically ripened fruits and punishment for responsible traders and officials. It also called for strict disciplinary action against negligent officers who fail to perform their duties. Activists also demanded strong laws to stop artificial ripening practices and suggested awareness campaigns to help people identify natural fruits. They explained that chemically treated mangoes often float in water, while natural fruits tend to sink.

They further urged the government to set up fruit testing laboratories in every district to ensure food safety and protect public health. Leaders from several organisations said urgent intervention is needed to ensure that people across the state receive safe and chemical-free fruits during the mango season and prevent health hazards.

QUICK READ

Mandya excise dept announces vehicle auction

CH NEWS, Mandya
The Excise Department in Mandya district will conduct a public auction of seized and confiscated vehicles involved in various excise cases. The auction will be held at different zonal offices between May 25 and May 29. Officials said the vehicles will be sold in their "as-is" condition through open tender process. The auction begins on May 25 at Mandya Zone, followed by Maddur and Malavalli on May 26, Srirangapatna on May 27, and Nagamangala and K.R. Pet on May 29. Interested bidders can inspect vehicles during office hours. Authorities said designated officers will manage the process and ensure transparency during the auction proceedings.

Arebhashe border festival celebrations planned in Virajpet

CH NEWS, Madikeri
The Arebhashe Border Festival-2026 will be held on May 13 at 9 am at Thora Community Hall in Virajpet. The event is organized by Karnataka Arebhashe Culture and Sahitya Academy along with Arebhashe Culture and Development Association, Kedamullur. Several leaders, public representatives and cultural personalities including MLA A.S. Ponnanna will participate in the festival. Organizers said the program will include felicitation of meritorious achievers, local cultural performances and a comedy show by social media comedian Jeevan Keramole. Academy members and association representatives will also attend the event celebrating Arebhashe language, culture and traditions in Kodagu district with community participation and enthusiasm.

Santosh Lad raises concerns over voter list revisions

Lad referred to Modi and Indira Gandhi, criticised economic policies, discussed middle-class concerns, Kangana Ranaut remarks, and electoral roll revision debates across parties

DHARWAD

Minister Santosh Lad said in Dharwad that voter list revisions carried out in several states show large-scale deletions and additions across India. He said reports mention voter deletions of 27 lakh in West Bengal and large numbers in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Maharashtra and Haryana. He claimed that millions of voters are being targeted nationally and questioned the process of verification and transparency. He also said similar exercises may take place in Karnataka in future.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he made remarks about governance, travel and public programmes. He also mentioned former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in comparison with current national economic conditions. He criticised economic policies and referred to rising costs of living, education issues and closure of schools during earlier years. He also mentioned actor and MP Kangana Ranaut in his comments on public debate and media discussions. He said middle-class concerns, gold purchases and economic pressures are being widely discussed across the country. He added that political decisions and policy debates continue to shape public opinion ahead of future elections. Leaders from different states and parties have raised questions about electoral roll revisions and their implementation methods.

The minister concluded that voters should remain aware and seek clarity on electoral processes through official channels.

Addressing public concerns, he said that election authorities must ensure accurate verification of voter lists before any removal process. He questioned why large-scale deletions are happening differently across states and asked who will be held responsible for irregularities. He said democratic rights of citizens must be protected and no eligible voter should be denied voting due to technical errors. He further added that transparency and accountability are essential in maintaining trust in the electoral system of the country.

The remarks sparked discussion among political circles in Dharwad, where leaders debated voter list revision policies and implementation. He urged citizens to stay informed and participate actively in strengthening democratic processes through awareness and engagement.

He concluded that public dialogue on electoral reforms is necessary for a healthy democracy in India.

Quick action ordered on drinking water crisis

KALABURAGI

Deputy Commissioner Ikram Sharif directed officials to take immediate action to address drinking water problems across Kalaburagi district during the District Disaster Management Authority meeting on Tuesday. He said that wherever water scarcity occurs in rural or urban areas rented tube wells should be arranged immediately and water supplied to habitations without delay. He instructed officials to identify villages that have been facing drinking water problems for the last three to four years and prioritise them for continuous monitoring. He warned that failure to provide drinking water even in the 21st century would be considered administrative negligence and directed coordination with Zilla Panchayat and urban bodies.

Officials informed that water is being supplied to 26 villages through rented tube wells due to scarcity. District authorities advised that agreements should be made with farmers for tube well rental and proper documentation maintained. KUDIFC officials reported that Kalaburagi city receives 60 MLD water from Bhima river and 22 MLD from Bennetora, but Bhima reserves may last only about 22 more days if monsoon is delayed. Zilla Panchayat CEO Bhanwar Singh Meena instructed that PDOs must act responsibly and avoid giving excuses such as lack of funds stating that sufficient grants are available. The district has received Rs 17.30 crore from KKRDB for water supply works and officials were told to utilise it effectively along with tanker services where necessary. Additional Deputy Commissioner Rayappa Hunasagi also advised creating awareness about lightning and heatwave safety among the public.

Forest Minister orders closure of trekking routes

CHAMARAJANAGAR

Forest Minister Ishwar Khandre has ordered temporary closure of all trekking trails and forest road routes in areas with wildlife movement after a leopard attack killed a 10-year-old boy in Nagamale forest of the district. The decision was issued after public safety concerns following repeated human wildlife conflict incidents involving leopards tigers elephants and bears in forest regions. A government circular directed that trekking and traffic routes in such sensitive zones must remain closed until further orders are issued.

Forest Department and Karnataka Eco Tourism Development Board have been asked to strictly follow Standard Operating Procedures before allowing any trekking activity. Officials said trekking will only resume after safety checks and proper preparedness in areas where wildlife movement is recorded. Separate circulars have been issued by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden to enforce the order across Karnataka forest zones. Authorities urged trekkers and tourists to cooperate with restrictions and avoid entering forest paths until official clearance is given by authorities.

Magistrate Prabhu directed gram sabha participation, prioritised vulnerable groups, and stressed transparent housing scheme implementation and eligibility-based decisions

Gram sabha verification made mandatory for housing sites

CHIKKABALLAPURA

District Magistrate G. Prabhu instructed officials to ensure that only eligible beneficiaries receive government housing sites in Chikkaballapura district after proper verification in gram sabhas. He reviewed the progress of housing and site distribution schemes at a meeting held in the District Collector's office and stressed transparency in selection. He said nodal officers have been appointed for 154 gram panchayats to attend gram sabhas and submit reports ensuring proper identification of landless families.

Taluk Panchayat executive officers and district officials must also attend meetings and follow government criteria while selecting beneficiaries for housing sites without any deviation. Priority should be given to landless families listed in the 2018 survey after field verification by local officials confirming that they do not own any site or house. Beneficiary names must be read aloud in gram sabhas and verified publicly to ensure transparency and prevent any misuse of the selection process. Certificates confirming lack of land ownership should be issued by panchayat development officers before allotment of sites to eligible applicants under government schemes.

Magistrate Prabhu directed officials to ensure at least 100 voters participate in each gram sabha and instructed priority for women disabled persons freed slaves and ex servicemen. Officials including additional district collector Dr. N. Bhaskar and other administrative officers attended the meeting and discussed implementation of housing schemes across the district. He emphasized that gram sabha decisions must be transparent accountable and strictly based on eligibility criteria set by the government to ensure fair distribution of housing benefits.

The administration will conduct field inspections to verify ownership status and remove ineligible names from beneficiary lists before final approval of site allocation. Authorities said strict monitoring will continue to ensure that only deserving families receive government sites in a transparent and accountable manner across Chikkaballapura district. District Magistrate G. Prabhu reiterated that the entire selection process for housing sites must remain free from political influence and corruption, and every eligible beneficiary should be identified through proper verification, public participation, and strict adherence to government guidelines for fair distribution of plots in rural areas across all taluks of the district region.

Mandya District Hospital to open new maternal care unit

MANDYA

The inauguration ceremony of the newly built Midwifery Based Care Unit (MLCU) and Breast Milk Collection Center, known as Shishu Sanjeevini Milk Bank, will be held on May 13 at Mandya District Hospital. It is being organized by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Institute of Medical Sciences, and the Health and Family Welfare Department. The program will start at 1 pm in the hospital premises and aims to improve maternal and newborn care services in the district.

Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H. D. Kumaraswamy will attend as the chief guest. Agriculture and district in-charge Minister N. Chaluvarayaswamy will inaugurate the event. Several state ministers including Priyanka Kharge, R. Dinesh Gundu Rao, and Sharan Prakash Patil will attend as honorary guests. Mandya MLA P. Ravikumar will preside over the function. Many MLAs, council members, and heads of state boards will also take part in the event. Prominent leaders such as A. B. Ramesh Bandisiddegowda, P. M. Narendra Swamy, Dinesh Gooli Gowda, Madhu G. Made Gowda, K. Vivekananda, Darshan Puttanaiah, H. T. Manju, and K. M. Udaya will be present. Chairpersons of various state bodies and corporations, including electricity, pollution control, food, sugar, and handloom sectors, will also join.

Officials said the new Midwifery Based Care Unit will support safe childbirth services, while the Shishu Sanjeevini Milk Bank will collect and store breast milk for newborn babies who need extra care. The initiative is expected to strengthen maternal health, improve infant survival, and provide better medical support to families in Mandya.

Probe ordered over payments to dead beneficiaries

MANGALURU

Officials have been asked to take action over money deposited into accounts of deceased Grihalakshmi beneficiaries. Chairman Bharat Mundodi said nearly twenty two crore rupees has reached such accounts in Dakshina Kannada district. He instructed officials to verify deaths and recover funds through banks and government records without delay. A review meeting on guarantee schemes was held at Zilla Panchayat in Mangaluru on Tuesday.

Officials reported that over three lakh eighty two thousand beneficiaries are enrolled under Grihalakshmi scheme. Members raised concern over ration shop delays under Annabhagya scheme in Arkula area for months.

They also discussed biometric issues faced by elderly ration card holders during service delivery process. The chairman said relaxation should be given for thumb impression problems among senior citizens. Encroachment of KSRTC land in Nelyadi was also reviewed and officials were directed to act. The committee also suggested skill training programmes for youth at taluk level under Youth Fund scheme.

Officials said information on training opportunities will be shared widely to help unemployed youth gain skills. They assured that irregularities will be investigated and action will be taken as per rules.

The district administration said citizen grievances will be addressed quickly to improve transparency and service delivery. Authorities urged departments to coordinate effectively and ensure benefits reach genuine eligible beneficiaries without delay.

Farmers demand water diversion to 124 lakes

VIJAYAPURA

Farmers and local leaders in Vijayapura district have urged the district administration to allow diversion of water to 124 lakes, as many tanks are facing severe water shortage across the region due to drying canals and falling storage levels officials said canals remained dry until April 28 but partial releases improved storage in some lakes with reports claiming up to seventy percent filling in a few areas which was described as the highest level in the state so far this season amid rising heat conditions a protest was held at the AHAOI medical engineer office in Alachitti where villagers demanded immediate action to restore drinking water supply engineer D Bachiraja Achiru submitted a request letter seeking approval to supply water to affected habitations including Kaluchiga and Chittagong prompting discussion on emergency measures.

District officials reported that drinking water has not reached several lakes for some time increasing concern among residents as summer approaches within a month authorities warned of worsening scarcity conditions and issued instructions to fill water tanks to seventy five to eighty percent capacity across all villages prioritizing drinking water needs the district commissioner approved emergency permissions during the meeting ensuring swift implementation of supply measures to prevent crisis escalation farmer organizations also demanded legal changes to strengthen water rights and local management systems several representatives including Aravinda Kulkarni and others supported coordinated planning for long term water security in the district officials assured continued monitoring and supply efforts to ensure relief for affected communities during the critical summer period while further assessments of lake levels and canal systems will guide upcoming distribution decisions across Vijayapura district region.

MANDYA WATER ASSURANCE

Mandya orders strong summer water action plan

MANDYA

District In-charge Secretary and Health and Family Welfare Department Principal Secretary Manoj Kumar Meena directed officials to ensure that there is no drinking water shortage anywhere in Mandya district during the summer season. He also instructed that all applications under the Sakala Scheme must be disposed of within the fixed time limit to ensure timely public services.

He was speaking while chairing a progress review meeting at the District Collector office. He stressed that Sakala Scheme services should be delivered efficiently and without delay to the public across rural and urban areas.

Meena reviewed drinking water supply arrangements, progress of Jal Jeevan Mission projects and availability of fodder for livestock in the district. He instructed officials to respond quickly to public complaints and ensure safe drinking water supply after proper quality testing. He also directed that tankers should be used on priority in villages facing severe water shortage.

The Secretary said that compensation must be provided to families of farmers who died due to debt or agricultural distress, and eligible beneficiaries should receive timely social security payments every month. Deputy Commissioner Dr Kumar informed the meeting that around 289 villages in the district are likely to face drinking water shortage during summer. He said arrangements have already been made to supply water through private tube wells in 15 villages and precautionary steps are underway in other affected areas. He added that officials have been instructed to deepen tube wells, install additional pipes and provide electricity connections wherever required to maintain water supply. Officials also informed that census work in the district is progressing smoothly.

Sunflower MSP procurement begins in Vijayapura district

VIJAYAPURA

District administration has decided to start registration and procurement of sunflower under Minimum Support Price scheme at Rs 7,721 per quintal for 2026 Hingar season. Decision was taken in a meeting of MSP Task Force Committee chaired by Deputy Commissioner Dr Anand K.

Farmer registration will remain open for 50 days while procurement will continue for 60 days. Thirteen procurement centres have been opened in Babaleshwar Savanahalli Tajpur Vijayapura Muddebihal Talikoti Tangadagi Indi Chadachan Halsangi Sindagi and Basavan Bagewadi.

NAFED has been appointed as central procurement agency while Karnataka Cooperative Oilseeds Growers Federation will function as agency. Officials said procurement is limited to four quintals per acre and twenty quintals per farmer. Payments will be transferred to farmers Aadhaar linked bank accounts through DBT within five days. Sunflower cultivation covered 161 hectares with estimated yield of 2,898 quintals this season.

QUICK READ

3 killed as pickup truck overturns in MP's Bhind

Bhopal

At least three persons were killed and two others critically injured on Tuesday when a pickup truck that was also transporting livestock crashed into a tree in Dardaua village of Bhind district under Mehgaon police station area. According to police, the driver lost control of the vehicle and crashed into a tree. The incident occurred in the early hours, police officials said. According to local police officials, the victims were heading toward Dardaua village with a buffalo on board. As the truck approached gate number one at Dardaua Dham, it suddenly veered off the road and crashed into a tree before overturning. The impact of the collision was so severe that three of the passengers died instantly at the scene.

Delhi-NCR braces for rain, thunderstorms

New Delhi

Delhi-NCR is likely to witness a sudden and significant change in weather conditions on Tuesday, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing a 'yellow alert' for Tuesday.According to the Meteorological Department, the day is expected to remain overcast, with the possibility of light rain accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds. Weather activity is likely to intensify during the afternoon, evening, and night hours. The wind speed may reach between 40 and 50 kmph. As per the local weather forecast issued by the IMD, the maximum temperature on Tuesday is expected to hover around 35 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature.

Cops arrest offender evading trial in robbery case

New Delhi

The Anti-Jail Bail and Proclaimed Offenders Cell of Dwarka District Police has arrested a Proclaimed Offender who had been evading trial in a robbery case, officials said on Tuesday. The accused, identified as Mohit alias Monty, was declared a Proclaimed Offender on April 22, in connection with FIR No. 98/2018 registered under Sections 392, 411 and 34 of the IPC at Janakpuri Nagar Police Station by the Dwarka Court.

CISF holds air crash mock drill at Delhi airport

NEW DELHI

A full-scale aircraft crash mock exercise 'Agni Chakra' was organised at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in the national capital by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel, a key wing of the country's paramilitary forces entrusted with the security of the airport and other aviation establishments.

The mock exercise was undertaken by the CISF, involving a large number of personnel simulating crash-landing conditions at the airport and quick response, in coordination with various stakeholders manning the airport.

Various personnel from ARFF, Delhi Police, BDDS, medical teams.

Committed to ensuring Ayushman Bharat reaches last mile in Bengal: CM

Thanking PM Modi for supporting the rollout, Adhikari said people of West Bengal had been deprived of several Central schemes for years

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Tuesday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for supporting the rollout of the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana in the state, saying the new double-engine government is committed to ensuring that central welfare schemes reach every citizen without obstruction.

In a post on social media platform X, Adhikari expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and said that the people of West Bengal had been deprived of several central welfare schemes for years. He stated that the new government would work to ensure effective implementation of Ayushman Bharat and other central initiatives at the grassroots level.

The chief minister said the state had returned to a path of development and cooperation with the central government under the double-engine administration, a term often used by the Bharatiya Janata Party to describe governments led by the same political alliance at both the state and national levels.

Prime Minister Modi also welcomed the launch of the

healthcare scheme in West Bengal and described it as a major step toward improving access to affordable and quality medical treatment for residents of the state. In his statement, Modi said the welfare of the people of West Bengal remained his top priority and added that the implementation of Ayushman Bharat would provide citizens access to one of the world's largest healthcare programmes.

The Prime Minister further stated that the new state government would ensure the smooth delivery of key central schemes aimed at improving public welfare and social development.

The Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is implemented by the National Health Authority under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The scheme provides annual health insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary healthcare services.

Launched in September 2018, the programme is designed to support economically weaker and vulnerable families by offering cashless hospitalization at empanelled public and private hospitals across the country.

Healthcare experts believe the inclusion of West Bengal in the scheme could significantly improve access to medical treatment for millions of residents, especially low-income families who often struggle with rising healthcare costs.

Cong yet to name Kerala CM despite UDF's massive victory

NEW DELHI

More than a week after the Congress-led United Democratic Front secured a sweeping victory in the Kerala Assembly elections, uncertainty continues over who will become the next chief minister of the state.What was initially expected to be a smooth transition of power following the UDF's decisive electoral victory has instead turned into a prolonged leadership suspense within the Congress party. While celebrations continue across Kerala, senior party leaders remain engaged in consultations and internal discussions over the selection of the next chief minister.

On Tuesday, the leadership process gained further attention after senior Congress leader Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan was summoned to New Delhi for another round of consultations with the party high command. His meeting is being viewed as part of ongoing efforts to finalize a consensus candidate for the chief minister's post.

According to party sources, K. C. Venugopal currently appears to enjoy the support of a majority among the Congress party's 63 legislators in Kerala. Venugopal, who serves as the All India Congress Committee general secretary (organisation), is considered a trusted figure within the national leadership and is believed to have the confidence of senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

However, Venugopal's emergence as a leading contender has reportedly generated dissatisfaction among sections of Congress workers and supporters in Kerala. Many grassroots leaders and party supporters believe that the chief minister's position should go to V. D. Satheesan, who led the opposition campaign against the second government of Pinarayi Vijayan over the past five years.

Supporters of Satheesan argue that his aggressive political campaigns and consistent criticism of the previous government played a major role in the UDF's electoral success. While Venugopal may enjoy stronger backing from the central leadership, Satheesan is widely seen as having greater emotional support among ordinary Congress

What was initially expected to be a smooth transition of power after the UDF's decisive victory has now turned into a leadership selection crisis

workers in Kerala.

Veteran Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala also remains an important contender due to his long experience in both administration and party organization.

The debate over the leadership has now expanded beyond party circles into public discussion. One major issue being raised is whether a sitting Member of Parliament should be appointed as Kerala's chief minister. However, Congress insiders point to previous examples where leaders holding national positions later moved to state leadership roles, including Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and former Kerala Chief Minister A. K. Antony. Before leaving for consultations in Delhi, Radhakrishnan indicated that discussions were nearing a conclusion.

JCD Prabhakar elected TN Assembly speaker unopposed

CHENNAI

JCD Prabhakar was elected unopposed as the Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, while Ravi Shankar was chosen as Deputy Speaker during the second day of the 17th Assembly session.

The election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker took place amid heightened political attention after the TVK-led alliance, headed by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, secured 108 seats in the 234-member Assembly and emerged as the single largest formation in the state.

Following the election results, the TVK formed the government with the support of allied parties. Ahead of the Assembly session, Karuppiah, the MLA from Cholavandan, was appointed Pro-tem Speaker and administered the oath of office by Governor Rajendra Viswanath Arlekar.

The first session of the newly elected Assembly began, during which all newly elected legislators formally took oath as Members of the Legislative Assembly. Chief Minister Vijay, Opposition Leader Udhayanidhi Stalin, ministers, and legislators from various parties participated in the proceedings.

Political observers closely monitored the election for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker posts due to the shifting political dynamics in Tamil Nadu following the dramatic election outcome. However, since no opposing candidates filed nominations for either position, both J.C.D. Prabhakar and Ravi Shankar were declared elected unopposed.

In accordance with Assembly tradition, Pro-tem Speaker Karuppiah and Opposition Leader Udhayanidhi Stalin escorted the newly elected Speaker to the Speaker's chair in the Assembly chamber.

Leaders from both the ruling alliance and the opposition congratulated the newly elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker during the proceedings. Chief Minister Vijay and Opposition Leader Stalin expressed hope that the Assembly would function smoothly and democratically under the new leadership.

GRP personnel open fire on suspects to foil train robbery

AMARAVATI

Government Railway Police (GRP) opened fire on suspects in Andhra Pradesh's Guntur district to foil a train robbery attempt in the early hours of Tuesday.

The incident occurred around 3 A.M. near Aluru railway gate in Ponnur mandal under Guntur railway sub-division.

Personnel of Government Railway Police (GRP) spotted suspects moving near the tracks with cutters and challenged them. The suspects pelted stones on the police personnel, forcing them to open fire. The suspects got away in the darkness.

The incident triggered a scare in the area. Additional police force from Ponnur Police Station rushed there to ensure security of the trains passing through the route.

Recently there have been several attempts by miscreants to tamper with signalling systems in Vijayawada division to commit train robberies. In view of these incidents, GRP has stepped up patrolling along the tracks.

A Sub-Inspector and two Constables, who were patrolling the area, found two persons moving in a suspicious manner near the railway signal. The policemen saw them carrying tools to cut the wires. They tried to nab the suspects but the latter pelted them with stones. The policemen opened fire in self-defence. The suspects escaped in the darkness in the nearby fields.Senior police officials rushed to the spot. GRP Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Akhleshwar Rao, stated that a total of 10 rounds were fired. Six rounds were fired from 303 rifles while the SI opened four rounds from his pistol.

Police recovered a cutter, tester, gloves and other items left behind by the miscreants. Following the incident, police launched a massive hunt for them.

Six teams of GRP and local police were making efforts to nab the suspected robbers.

Officials said they would further step up security measures for the safety of railway passengers.

CJI forms panel to assess judicial infra needs

NEW DELHI

In a move aimed at strengthening the justice delivery system, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant has constituted a Judicial Infrastructure Advisory Committee to evaluate the infrastructural requirements of courts nationwide.

The committee, headed by Supreme Court judge Justice Aravind Kumar, has been tasked with preparing an assessment of judicial infrastructure needs nationwide and is expected to make a case for a government allocation of around Rs 40,000-50,000 crore for the sector.

An interim report has been directed to be submitted by August 31. Apart from Justice Aravind Kumar, the panel includes Justice Debangsu Basak of the Calcutta High Court, Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, and Justice Somasekhar Sundaresan of the Bombay High Court as members. The Director General of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), New Delhi, and the Secretary General of the Supreme Court of India will also be part of the panel, with the latter serving as Member Secretary.

The committee is expected to map infrastructural gaps across courts and recommend measures aimed at modernising judicial facilities and improving efficiency in the administration of justice.

Its proposed areas of focus include identifying constraints faced by stakeholders in the justice delivery system, suggesting adequate infrastructure for judges, lawyers, litigants and visitors, and recommending technology-driven inter-

ventions for faster disposal of cases.

The panel is also expected to examine issues relating to the computerisation of courts under the e-Courts initiative, citizen-centric digital services, the establishment of modern court complexes, and the improvement of working conditions for judicial officers and court staff.

The development assumes significance amid growing focus on judicial infrastructure and the digitisation of courts across the country. The Centre has also been pushing the digitisation of the judiciary under the e-Courts Mission Mode Project.

The government has allocated Rs 7,210 crore for Phase-III of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project (2023-2027), aimed at transforming Indian courts into digital and paperless institutions.

According to the government, the initiative includes digitisation of legacy records, expansion of video conferencing facilities to courts, jails and hospitals, universal saturation of e-Sewa Kendras, deployment of artificial intelligence-based tools, and creation of cloud-based repositories for judicial data.

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Office of the Deputy General Manager-2, 1st Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru-560052.
E-mail: bswmlee4@gmail.com

No. DGM-2/BSWML/PR/ 54/2026-27 Date: 12.05.2026

CANCELLATION OF TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Tender Notification No:DGM-2/BSWML/TEND/03/2026-27, dated: 02.05.2026, invited through kpp portal for Storm water drain from Kannur - Chikkagubbi - Doddagubbi - Rampura Lake - Yelemale Chatty lake and Culverts approach roads is cancelled.

Sd/-
Deputy General Manager-2, BSWML

DIPR/CP/624/NR/2026-27

FORM NO. INC-26

Notice

[Pursuant to rule 30 the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014]
Advertisement to be published in the Newspaper for Shifting the Registered office of Company from "State of Karnataka" to "State of Tamil Nadu".

Before the Regional Director South-Western Region.
Ministry of Corporate Affair

In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013, Section 13(4) of Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 30(5) of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014

AND

In the matter of **AIML DATA ANALYTICS SOLUTIONS PRIVATE LIMITED** (CIN U72900KA2019PTC144216) a Company incorporated under the Company Act 2013 having its registered office at Holder #148, 6th Sector, HSR, L/O B-102, Bangalore, Karnataka, India, 560102..... (Applicant Company/Petitioner)

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Company proposes to make application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the special resolution passed through the Postal ballot on September 19, 2025 to enable the Company to change its Registered office from **"State of Karnataka"** to **"State of Tamil Nadu"**.

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may deliver or cause to be delivered either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the Regional Director, 'E' Wing, 2nd Floor, Kendriya Sadana, Kormangala, Banglore-560034, Karnataka within Fourteen days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:

AIML Data Analytics Solutions Private Limited
Registered Address: Holder #148, 6th Sector, HSR, L/O B-102,
Bangalore, Karnataka, India, 560102

For and on behalf of the Applicant
Sd/-
Jawahar Sukumar
Director
DIN: 08667932

Date: 13.05.2026
Place: Karnataka

ಪುರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ ಚಂದಾಪುರ
ಆನೇಕಲ್ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ-560081
ಫೋನ್: 080-27832411, E-Mail: ka.chandapura.tmc@gmail.com
ಸಂ:ಚಂ.ಪು.ಕಾ/ತಾ.ಶಾ/ಕೆಪಿಪಿಪಿ/ಟೆಂ/03/2026-27 ದಿನಾಂಕ:12.05.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ 1999 ಮತ್ತು ನಿಯಮಗಳನ್ವಯ 2000ರ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಸ್ಟ್ಯಾಂಡರ್ಡ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್ ನಿಯಮಗಳನ್ವಯ, 2026-27ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಪುರಸಭಾ ನಿಧಿಯಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ವಿವಿಧ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲು ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯ ನೊಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ದರ್ಜೆ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ಇಲಾಖಾ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಪಡೆದು ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದು.

(As Per Government order No.FD 4 PCL 2008, Bangalore, dated:14.10.2008 and Government Order No. FD 876 Exp-12/2017, Bangalore, dated: 10/10/2027 and A&B Value Considered Upto 2024-25)

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ.	ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ. ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)
1	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58150	22.30
2	DMA/2026-27/RD/WORK_INDENT58153	29.90
3	DMA/2026-27/RD/WORK_INDENT58154 (Reserve For CAT-II(A)	26.20
4	DMA/2026-27/RD/WORK_INDENT58155	29.90
5	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58156	29.90
6	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58159	29.90
7	DMA/2026-27/RD/WORK_INDENT58160	27.00
8	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58161 (Reserve For SC)	29.90
9	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58165	29.00
10	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58166 (Reserve For CAT-II(A)	29.00
11	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58168 (Reserve For SC)	22.00
12	DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT54073	15.00
13	DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT58169	29.90
14	DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT56629/ CALL-2	28.90

ವೇಳಾಪಟ್ಟಿ: 1) ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ದರಗಳನ್ನು ನಮೂದಿಸಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ **ದಿನಾಂಕ:26.05.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 5:00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ. 2)** ಸ್ವೀಕೃತವಾದ ಟೆಂಡರನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ **ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ:27.05.2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 5:30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ. 3)** ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಪುರಸಭೆಯ ಕಿರಿಯ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರಿಂದ ಅಥವಾ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:080-27832411 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ಸಹಿ/-
ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿ
ಪುರಸಭೆ, ಚಂದಾಪುರ

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಾಪ್ರ/ಜೆಎ/614/2026-27

CH CLASSIFIEDS To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

QUICK READ

Cracks in Kerala's Left fortress as tussle spills into open

Thiruvananthapuram

Even before the dust settles on the Left Democratic Front's (LDF) crushing electoral defeat in Kerala, fresh fault lines have begun surfacing within the alliance, with the simmering tensions between the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) now threatening to snowball into a major political confrontation. What began as an internal disagreement over the post of Deputy Leader of the Opposition has rapidly transformed into a larger battle over relevance, dominance and political space within the Left camp after its dramatic fall from power. Ironically, the flare up comes at a time when LDF Convener T.P. Ramakrishnan publicly mocked the Congress for delaying the decision on the Chief Minister's name, even as trouble was already brewing within his own camp.

Rajasthan secures second spot in PMGSY road length

Jaipur

Rajasthan has secured the second position nationally under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for both the length of roads constructed and adherence to quality standards, officials said on Tuesday. Congratulating the state on this achievement, Deputy Chief Minister and Public Works Department Minister Diya Kumari stated that Rajasthan is setting new benchmarks in road infrastructure development. She said that strong road connectivity across the state is opening new avenues for economic growth and development. Over the past 25 years, extensive work related to the construction,

Vijay invokes British parliamentary system in Assembly

Chennai

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Tuesday invoked the history of the British parliamentary system and stressed the importance of democratic traditions while addressing the Assembly after TVK MLA J.C.D. Prabhakar was elected unopposed as the Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. Speaking in the House, Vijay recalled how Speakers in England during the monarchy era played a crucial role in communicating Parliament's decisions to the King, often at great personal risk. The Speaker had the responsibility of informing the King whenever Parliament rejected his proposals. In those days, kings even had the power to order executions, and Speakers.

NTA cancels NEET-UG 2026 amid 'irregularities'

Decision taken after reviewing inputs received regarding possible malpractice linked to the examination

NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Tuesday announced the cancellation of the NEET-UG 2026 examination conducted on May 3, citing alleged irregularities in the examination process.

In an official statement posted on the social media platform X, the NTA said the decision was taken after reviewing inputs received from central agencies and law enforcement authorities regarding possible malpractice linked to the examination. The agency stated that maintaining transparency and credibility in the national examination system was the primary reason behind the cancellation.

The NTA recalled that it had earlier issued a press release on May 10 and had already referred the matter to central agencies on May 8 for independent verification and

necessary action. According to the agency, the move was consistent with its commitment to ensuring fair and secure conduct of examinations across the country.

The statement noted that investigative findings shared by law enforcement agencies raised serious concerns about the integrity of the examination process. After examining these findings in coordination with central authorities, the NTA concluded that the examination could not be allowed to stand in its current form.

With the approval of the Government of India, the National Testing Agency has decided to cancel the NEET (UG) 2026 examination conducted on May 3, 2026, and to re-conduct the examination on dates that will be notified separately, the statement said.

The Government of India has also decided to hand over the matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation for a comprehensive inquiry into the allegations surrounding the examination. The NTA stated that it would fully cooperate with the investigation and provide all necessary records, materials, and assistance required by the agency.

The examination body further informed candidates that details regarding the fresh examination schedule and re-issued admit cards would be communicated through official channels in the coming days. Students have been advised to regularly monitor official announcements for updates related to the revised examination process.

Turmoil in NCP over national executive list

MUMBAI

The absence of names such as Praful Patel, Chhagan Bhujbal, Sunil Tatkare, and Dilip Walse Patil led to speculation

Political uncertainty has intensified within the Nationalist Congress Party led by Ajit Pawar after the release of a new National Executive list submitted to the Election Commission of India.

The controversy began after a three-page document detailing the party's new organisational structure surfaced in the public domain. The list, dated April 29, appeared to omit several veteran leaders who have long been considered influential figures within the party.

The absence of names such as Praful Patel, Chhagan Bhujbal, Sunil Tatkare, and Dilip Walse Patil from the main National Executive immediately led to speculation about possible restructuring and internal power shifts.

The newly-formed National Executive placed Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar in the role of National President. Their elder son, Rajya Sabha member Parth Pawar, was named National General Secretary, while younger son Jai Pawar was appointed National Secretary. The prominent inclusion of the Pawar family members fueled discussions regarding generational transition within the party leadership.

The exclusion of senior leader Sunil Tatkare from the position of National General Secretary attracted particular attention. Tatkare had previously held a crucial organisational role and is considered one of the party's prominent faces in Maharashtra politics.

Similarly, Praful Patel, regarded as one of the party's most trusted senior leaders, was not listed as National Working President, leading to further speculation about a possible strategic realignment.

As criticism and debate intensified on social media, Sunetra Pawar issued a clarification on the platform X, stating that the circulated list contained technical and clerical errors. She assured party workers and supporters that the mistakes would soon be corrected. Sources later indicated that a follow-up communication had been sent to the Election Commission on the same day seeking corrections to the submitted documents.

Despite the clarification, political observers believe the development may reflect the party's long-term intention to promote younger leadership within the organisation. Analysts noted that while senior leaders were not completely removed, their roles appeared significantly reduced compared to earlier positions.

Another section of the document detailed the formation of a National Working Committee headed by Sunetra Pawar. In this committee, Praful Patel was included as the party's leader in the Rajya Sabha, though without the earlier designation of National Working President. Sunil Tatkare was listed as the party's leader in the Lok Sabha but was no longer identified as National General Secretary or Maharashtra unit president.

Veteran minister Chhagan Bhujbal and senior legislator Dilip Walse Patil were also included in the committee, although no official responsibilities were assigned to them. Shivajirao Garje was appointed National Treasurer, while Parth Pawar and former Union Minister Subodh Mohite were entrusted with the role of General Secretary.

NSUI HITS STREETS OVER NEET-UG PAPER LEAK

NEW DELHI

A large-scale protest led by the National Students' Union of India erupted near Shastri Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday against the alleged paper leak in the NEET-UG 2026 examination.

Hundreds of NSUI workers and student activists gathered near Shastri Bhawan to protest against the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG 2026 examination process. Protesters raised slogans demanding accountability and strict action against those responsible for the alleged paper leak, which has sparked nationwide concern among students and parents.The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test for Undergraduate admissions was conducted on May 3 across the country. Soon after the examination, allegations of a paper leak and irregularities began circulating, prompting multiple investigations by law enforcement agencies. The Rajasthan Special Operations Group and several central agencies have already initiated inquiries into the matter.

Carrying placards and banners, NSUI members accused authorities of failing to ensure a secure and transparent examination system. Protesters claimed that lakhs of students preparing for medical admissions had suffered uncertainty and mental stress due to the controversy surrounding the examination.Security personnel were deployed in large numbers near the protest site to maintain law and order and prevent any untoward incidents. Traffic movement in parts of central Delhi was also affected for some time because of the gathering and demonstrations.

The protest intensified after the National Testing Agency officially announced the cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 earlier in the day. In its statement, the agency said the decision was taken after examining inputs received from

central investigative agencies and law enforcement authorities regarding alleged irregularities in the examination process.

The NTA also confirmed that the examination would be re-conducted on dates that would be announced separately through official channels. According to the agency, the cancellation was necessary to maintain transparency, fairness, and credibility in the national examination system.

Student organisations and opposition groups have continued to demand a thorough investigation into the matter and strict punishment for those involved in the alleged malpractice.

Most TMC leaders are corrupt: Dilip Ghosh

KOLKATA

Newly appointed West Bengal Minister Dilip Ghosh on Tuesday alleged that most leaders of the Trinamool Congress are corrupt, a day after the Enforcement Directorate arrested former state minister Sujit Bose in connection with a municipal recruitment corruption case.

Speaking to media persons during his morning walk at Eco Park in Kolkata, Ghosh referred to alleged corruption involving Trinamool leaders in cases related to sand mining, cow smuggling, and black money.He said that all the cases filed against corrupt leaders during the previous government will be reopened for proper investigation.He said, Most of the Trinamool leaders are corrupt. Until now, the police and the government have not given permission, so the investigation has not progressed.

2 held with arms and ammunition in Srinagar

SRINAGAR

The J&K Police said on Tuesday that they have arrested two persons with arms, ammunition and posters of the proscribed terror outfit, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), during checking in Srinagar district.

Officials said a police team intercepted two persons on a bike near the Baba Dem area of Srinagar during routine checking. They said the duo was stopped and during the search, police recovered one pistol, three magazines, 21 live rounds, two mobile phones and 10 LeT posters from their possession.

A case FIR No. 26/2025 under relevant sections of UAPA and Arms Act has been registered, and further investigation has been taken up, he said. They have been identified as Faisal Ahmad Bhat of Malpora Habba Kadal and Faisal Ahmad Guroo of Rajouri Kadal.

The J&K Police and the security forces have been carrying out aggressive operations against terrorists.

Assam to continue development journey under Himanta: Scindia

GUWAHATI

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday said that Assam is set to continue its development journey under the leadership of Himanta Biswa Sarma, asserting that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government has received the people's blessings for a third consecutive term in the state.

Speaking to reporters after arriving in Guwahati to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Sarma and his council of ministers, Scindia said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas has transformed Assam and the northeastern region over the last 12 years.

Today, for the third time, the blessings of the people are with the Bharatiya Janata Party and with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's ideology has always been 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas'. Based on this ideology, Assam and the eight northeastern states have witnessed unprecedented progress in the last 12 years, Scindia said.

The Union Minister further stated that Assam would continue to move ahead on the same path of growth and development under the leadership of Sarma and the new NDA government.

Assam will continue to march forward on the same path. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Himanta ji and all his colleagues who are taking the oath today.

HELPING HAND FOR NEEDY

PM welcomes Ayushman Bharat rollout in Bengal

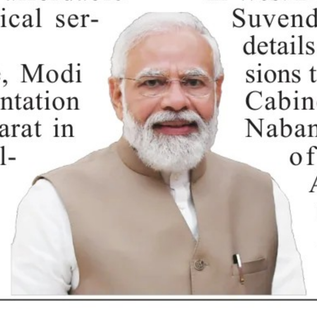
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday welcomed the implementation of Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana in West Bengal, stating that people in the state would now benefit from the world's largest healthcare scheme that provides affordable and quality medical treatment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed happiness over the rollout of the Ayushman Bharat healthcare scheme in West Bengal and said the initiative would significantly benefit the people of the state.

Sharing his views on social media platform X, the Prime Minister stated that the welfare of the people of West Bengal remained a priority and that the healthcare programme would ensure access to affordable and quality medical services.

In his message, Modi said the implementation of Ayushman Bharat in the state would allow residents to benefit from one of the world's largest healthcare programmes. He also stated that the double-engine government would ensure smooth implementation of major Central welfare schemes in West Bengal.



The Prime Minister's remarks came shortly after newly sworn-in West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari shared details regarding the decisions taken during the first Cabinet meeting held at Nabanna after assuming office on May 9. Adhikari described the first day of his administration as eventful and said the government had started converting its election promises into action through several major decisions aimed at improving governance and development in the state.One of the key announcements made by the new state government was the implementation of Ayushman Bharat in West Bengal. The decision is expected to enable eligible residents to receive benefits under the Centre's flagship health insurance programme.

Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is implemented by the National Health Authority.

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Office of the Deputy General Manager-3, 1st Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru-560052.

No. DGM-3/BSWML/Tend/03/2026-27 Date: 12.05.2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT) - Call-3 (Through GOK KPPP only)

The Deputy General Manager-3, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited on behalf of the Managing Director, BSWML, Bengaluru invites tender from eligible tenderers for the services mentioned in the table below. The tenderers may submit tenders for services through KPP portal of the Government of Karnataka **(viz. https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).**

Sl. No	Name of the services	Estimate amount of services (Rs. In Lakhs)	Duration	EMD Amount in Rs.
1	Providing exposure visit service for Pourakarmikas as part of the capacity-building programme. - Call-3	489.34	06 Months	7,34,010.00
2	Providing exposure visit service for the Executive officials and Technical officials as part of the capacity-building programme. - Call-3	140.17	06 Months	2,10,255.00

Calendar of Events: (1) Last date to upload pre-bid queries: **16.05.2026 upto 15.00 Hrs. in KPP Portal. (2)** Pre bid meeting: **16.05.2026 at 15.00 Hrs** at the office of CE & CGM-2 (Tech), BSWML, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanthnagar, Bangalore. **(3)** Last date for submission of the bids: **20.05.2026 upto 16.00 Hrs. (4)** Date of opening of Technical bid on : **21.05.2026 at 16.30 Hrs. (5)** Date of opening of Financial bids to be notified to technically qualified bidders.

Sd/-
DIPR/CP/626/SSC/2026-27 Deputy General Manager-3, BSWML.

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Office of the Deputy General Manager - 2, BSWML, 1st Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru – 560 052.

No. DGM-2/BSWML/TEND/04/2026-27 Date: 12.05.2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)
(Through GOK KPP Portal) **website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only**

The Deputy General Manager-2, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited on behalf of The Managing Director, BSWML, Bengaluru invites bids from eligible bidders for the **PRE QUALIFICATION FOR THE WORK** detailed in the table below. RFP documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka Procurement **website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in .** Other details can be seen in the tender documents.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Amount put tender (₹ in Lakhs) Excluding GST	Stipulated Period of Contract
1.	Storm Water Drain from Kannur - Chikkagubbi-Doddagubbi-Rampura Lake-Yelemale Chatty lake and Culverts approach Roads.	8005.49	11 Months

1. Pre bid meeting will be held on 21.05.2026 at 15:00 hours in office of the Chief Engineer & Chief General Manager (Tech), BSWML, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road,Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru - 560052.
2. Technical Documents along with necessary information/documents must be uploaded to the KPP Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** as per tender document on or before 16:00 hours of 30.05.2026.
3. The Technical bid will be opened through kpp-portal only on 01.06.2026 after 16:30 hours at the stipulated venue. Through KPP Portal in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives who wish to attend the opening process. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
4. The Employer shall not be liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any tender updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidders. It is the bidders responsibility to verify the KPP Portal for the latest information related to the bids, E-mail address of the Helpdesk is **hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com**. KPP Pportal help desk telephone numbers are: **080-22371090/22373788.** The bidders is required to ensure browser capability of the computer well in advance to the last date and time for receipt of the bids. The employer shall not be responsible for non-accessibility of KPP Portal due to internet connectivity issues and technical glitches.
5. Any corrigendum/addendum will be published in the KPP portal only.

DIPR/CP/RO623/AAPL/2026-27 **Sd/- Deputy General Manager -2, BSWML.**

QUICK READ

Search on for 14 missing after migrant boat capsizes

KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia's maritime agency has launched a search and rescue operation for 14 people missing after a boat believed to be carrying undocumented Indonesian migrants sank off its western coast. A fisherman alerted authorities after discovering victims floating in the waters off Pangkor island, Perak state maritime director Mohamad Shukri Khotob said in a statement. A local fishing vessel rescued 23 Indonesians, including seven women, who were escorted to a marine police jetty for documentation and further investigations, Mohamad Shukri said. Initial investigations found that the sunken boat, carrying 37 people, had departed from Kisaran, Indonesia on May 9 with its passengers headed for several Malaysian destinations including the capital Kuala Lumpur and Penang island in the northwest.

Zelenskiy's ex-chief of staff suspect in corruption probe

Kyiv

Ukrainian authorities named President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's powerful former chief of staff as a suspect in a major corruption probe, a move likely to pile pressure on the president's office at a sensitive moment in the war with Russia. Kyiv's political class was rocked by a wide-ranging investigation last year that had fueled public anger and prompted the ex-top adviser and Zelenskiy's right-hand man, Andriy Yermak, to resign. In a statement, Ukraine's anti-graft agencies said Yermak is suspected of participating in a criminal group that laundered around $10.5 million through an elite housing development outside the capital Kyiv. The agencies did not name Yermak, in line with Ukrainian law, but he was widely identified by local media. Speaking to Ukrainian outlet Radio Liberty, he denied owning real estate in the development but did not comment further.

Global fire outbreaks hit record high amid heatwave

SINGAPORE

Climate change has driven record-breaking outbreaks of fire in Africa, Asia and elsewhere this year, with conditions expected to get worse as the northern hemisphere's summer approaches and El Nino weather patterns kick in, scientists warned on Tuesday. Fires from January to April have already caused unprecedented levels of damage, burning more than 150 million hectares (370.66 million acres) of land, 20% more than the previous record, according to data compiled by World Weather Attribution, a research group that studies the role played by global warming in extreme weather events. The researchers said temperature records could be broken this year, causing widespread drought as well as fires, with the impact of human-induced climate change compounded by an especially strong El Nino effect.

US-Iran ceasefire on 'life support': Trump

Trump strongly criticized Iran's response to the US proposal, calling it garbage

WASHINGTON

Hopes for a breakthrough in the Iran conflict weakened sharply on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump declared that the fragile ceasefire with Iran was on life support.

Speaking to reporters, Trump strongly criticized Iran's response to the US proposal, calling it garbage and saying he did not even finish reading the document. The US president warned that the ceasefire agreement, which began on April 7, now faces serious uncertainty as tensions continue to rise between the two sides. The statement came after Tehran rejected a U.S.-backed proposal aimed at ending months of fighting and instead presented a list of demands that Washington described as unacceptable.

According to officials, the United States had proposed halting military operations first before moving toward negotiations on more complex issues, including Iran's nuclear program and regional security concerns. However, Tehran insisted on several conditions before agreeing to any long-term settlement.

Iran demanded an end to the conflict across all regional fronts, including the fighting in Lebanon, where Israel continues military operations against the Iran-backed Hezbollah group.

Tehran also stressed its sovereignty over the strategically important Strait of Hormuz, called for compensation for war-related damage, and demanded an end to the U.S. naval blockade in the region.

The continued standoff has significantly affected global oil markets. Brent crude futures climbed above $104.50 per barrel during early Asian trading on Tuesday as concerns grew over the near-closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Before the conflict erupted on February 28, the narrow waterway handled nearly one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas shipments, making it one of the world's most critical energy routes.The disruption has already forced several oil-producing nations to reduce exports. A Reuters survey released showed that OPEC oil output in April fell to its lowest level in more than two decades due to the ongoing instability in the Gulf region.

Meanwhile, the United States announced fresh sanctions targeting individuals and companies accused of helping Iran transport oil to China. Washington said the measures are intended to cut off funding for Iran's military and nuclear activities while tightening enforcement against sanctions evasion.

Trump heads to China seeking trade gains, diplomatic support

BEIJING

US President Donald Trump will travel to China this week for high-level talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping amid growing political and economic pressure at home.

The May 14-15 meetings in Beijing will mark the first face-to-face discussions between Trump and Xi since the two leaders paused a damaging trade war in October. Expectations for major breakthroughs, however, remain modest, with officials and analysts suggesting that only a few agreements on agricultural products, aviation, and trade management mechanisms are likely to emerge from the summit.

According to political observers, Trump enters the talks in a weaker negotiating position than anticipated a year ago. Legal challenges against his tariff policies in the United States and the continuing conflict with Iran have complicated his foreign policy agenda and affected his domestic approval ratings ahead of the upcoming midterm elections.

Alejandro Reyes, a professor specializing in Chinese foreign policy at the University of Hong Kong, said Trump appears to need diplomatic success more urgently than Beijing. He noted that the U.S. president is seeking a foreign policy achievement that would demonstrate his ability to bring stability rather than further disruption to international affairs.

Since the temporary trade truce was reached during the leaders' last meeting in South Korea, China has strengthened its economic leverage over Washington. Analysts say Beijing has quietly developed tools to increase pressure on the United States, particularly in areas linked to rare earth minerals and critical supply chains.

The upcoming summit in Beijing is expected to feature extensive ceremonial events, including meetings at the Great Hall of the People, a visit to the historic Temple of Heaven, and a state banquet hosted by the Chinese leadership. Trump and Xi are also scheduled to share tea and lunch during the visit.

Despite the grand setting, officials involved in planning the summit indicated that the actual economic outcomes may remain limited. It is still unclear whether both sides will agree to extend their current trade truce beyond the existing arrangement.

Trump will be accompanied by several major American business leaders, including Elon Musk and Tim Cook, although the delegation is reportedly smaller than the one that joined his Beijing visit in 2017.

In addition to trade, Trump said he plans to discuss U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and raise concerns about jailed Hong Kong media businessman Jimmy Lai. Families of two Americans imprisoned in China for more than a decade have also urged Trump to press for their release during the talks.Speaking before the trip, Trump said the United States was now performing strongly in its relationship with China and expressed hope for mutual respect between the two leaders as negotiations continue.

Iran war creates new must-have for summer holidays

PARIS

Greg Abbott is planning his summer holiday with half an eye on the Iran war. He intends to stay closer to home in Europe and is lining up a plan B, wary of rising air fares and cancellations.

The 54-year-old Britain-based Australian is planning a cycling trip with friends in Austria, a festival in Barcelona and possibly a yoga retreat in France. But he doesn't want to go too far and is keeping travel options open.We'll almost certainly be doing short-haul Europe, and almost certainly be doing trains, because they run on electricity, said Abbott, head of operations for a broadcasting company, adding cost was a key factor against longer trips.The prices are just crazy at the moment. Across Europe and beyond, tourists are reshaping plans in a world of $100 oil, tight jet fuel supply, higher costs and Middle East conflict disrupting popular routes. Many are booking later and building in flexibility.

We observe travellers becoming more cautious and deliberate, said Susanne Dickhardt, co-founder of camper van and motorhome hire firm Roadsurfer.

Most are adapting rather than cancelling, she said, staying nearer home, driving and choosing formats that keep costs down.

Tourism and aviation are among the sectors most exposed to the war. Slow-moving peace talks point to a prolonged stand-off, hitting Gulf airlines and popular hubs such as Dubai, while nearly doubling jet fuel prices.

You've got a war happening - a major war, said Jean-Francois.

Starmer faces growing revolt as Labour MPs seek resignation

LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer came under mounting political pressure after four ministerial aides resigned and more than 70 Labour lawmakers publicly called for him to step down following the party's heavy losses in recent local elections.

Speaking before Labour supporters in London, Starmer urged lawmakers and voters to remain united and avoid a leadership battle that he warned could plunge the party into instability and political chaos.

The prime minister argued that internal divisions would weaken Labour's ability to govern effectively at a time when Britain is facing multiple economic and social challenges.

However, the speech failed to convince many critics within his own party. According to reports from British media outlets, senior Labour figures have privately and publicly expressed doubts about Starmer's ability to lead the party into the next general election, scheduled for 2029.

The Times newspaper reported that Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood and several cabinet ministers had advised Starmer to consider setting a timeline for his departure. The report suggested that some senior members of government believe a planned transition of leadership may be necessary to restore voter confidence after Labour suffered one of its worst performances in local elections last week.

Further pressure came from Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper, who reportedly told Starmer that he should oversee an orderly transfer of power. British broadcaster ITV News also reported that Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy had urged the prime minister to establish a timetable for stepping down.

The political crisis deepened after four ministerial aides resigned from their posts, stating that they no longer believed Starmer was the right person to lead Labour into the next national election. Their resignations are expected to intensify calls for a formal leadership contest, which could last for several weeks or even months.

In response, Starmer quickly announced new appointments to fill the vacant positions in an effort to project stability and maintain control of his government. However, political analysts believe the growing rebellion inside Labour may continue to weaken his authority.

Starmer, 63, secured a large parliamentary majority in the 2024 general election, ending years of Conservative rule. Yet critics within the party argue that his government has struggled to address key issues facing Britain.

7 killed in market blast in Pakistan's Lakki Marwat

DERA ISMAIL KHAN

At least seven people, including two police officials and five civilians, were killed in a powerful explosion at a busy market in Lakki Marwat district in north-western Pakistan on Tuesday. Authorities said several others were also injured in the incident, which has raised fresh security concerns in the region bordering Afghanistan.

According to senior police officials, the blast occurred in a crowded marketplace in Lakki Marwat during peak business hours, causing panic among residents and shopkeepers. Emergency services and security personnel rushed to the area shortly after the explosion to begin rescue operations and transport the injured to nearby hospitals.

Officials confirmed that two police personnel were among those killed in the attack, while five civilians also lost their lives.

US issues new sanctions over Iran's oil shipments to China

WASHINGTON

The U.S. government announced sanctions against three people and nine companies, including four based in Hong Kong and four in the United Arab Emirates, for aiding Iran's shipment of oil to China. The ninth company is based in Oman.

The U.S. Treasury move follows sanctions announced on Friday on individuals and companies aiding Iranian purchases of weapons and components used to make drones and ballistic missiles.

It comes days before U.S. President Donald Trump's planned meeting with Xi Jinping, where he is expected to press the Chinese leader to help resolve the standoff with Iran and reopen the critical Strait of Hormuz.

Treasury said the new designations by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) were aimed at individuals and entities that helped Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps sell and ship its allotment of Iranian oil to China using a series of front companies. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the Trump administration would keep using sanctions to deprive the Iranian government.

Israeli law sets military tribunal for Hamas Oct 7 militants

JERUSALEM

Israel's parliament passed a law late establishing a military tribunal to try hundreds of Palestinian militants who took part in the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, a step lawmakers said would help heal national trauma.The surprise attack, led by elite Nukhba force fighters from the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

HEALTH EMERGENCY

Hantavirus cruise survivors land in Netherlands

AMSTERDAM

Two planes carrying passengers from the MV Hondius cruise ship, which was struck by a hantavirus outbreak, arrived in the Netherlands early Tuesday as health authorities intensified precautionary measures.

The outbreak, linked to the rare Andes strain of hantavirus, has already claimed three lives and triggered quarantine protocols for hospital staff treating infected patients.

The aircraft landed shortly after midnight at Eindhoven Airport, bringing home eight Dutch nationals among a total of 28 passengers evacuated from the expedition cruise ship. Authorities stated that passengers from other countries would continue onward travel to their respective home nations after arriving in the Netherlands.

The outbreak response expanded further after the Radboud University Medical Center placed 12 staff members under preventive quarantine for six weeks. Hospital officials said the workers may have been exposed after blood and urine samples from a hantavirus patient were handled before stricter safety procedures were introduced.

The hospital emphasized that the risk of infection remains extremely low and that medical services are continuing without disruption. The facility admitted one infected passenger from the MV Hondius on May 7.

CHANGE OF NAME

I Vishal Muralidharan S/o Muralidharan R/o 504, Tower 13, LnT Raintree Boulevard, Airport Road, Behind Phoenix Mall of Asia, Hebbal Main Road, VTC: Sahakaranagar P.O, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560092, have changed my name to Vishal Reji.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Manoharan Pathiyarathodi Narayanan, S/o Narayanan Murugan Pathiyarathodi, R/o #157, 2nd Floor, 3rd Main, 7th Cross, Talakavery Lay out, Basava Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560037, have changed my name to Manu Pathiyarath.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GEETHA W/o SRINIVASA RAO, R/o 55, 1st Cross, Muddamma Garden, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560046, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GEETHA.V

NAME CHANGE

I, **MOHAMED ZUBER**, S/o. Mohamed Anwar, Resident of No.80, 3rd B Cross, 1st Stage, Near Mosque, Karnataka Layout, Mahalakshmi Puram, Bengaluru North, Mahalakshmipuram Layout, Bengaluru-560086, have changed my name to **MOHAMED ZUBER A**, vide affidavit dated: 11.05.2026 before Notary R. BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NAGARAJ W S/o MOORTY R/o Tq Raichur, Gandhal, Raichur, Karnataka-584140, have changed the name of my minor son N LIHAN aged 1 years and he shall hereafter be known as SOURIYAN N

CHANGE OF NAME

I, KAVERAMMA TIRAKANNAVAR W/o MABHALESHWAR UGGINAKERI, R/o Hubballiyavar Street, Dastikoppa, Dharwad, Karnataka-581204, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KAVERAMMA MABHALESHWAR UGGINAKERI

Messi included as Argentina name World Cup 2026 squad

World champions unveil 55-member provisional squad ahead of title defence next month globally

BUENOS AIRES

Defending champions Argentina national football team have announced their preliminary 55-member squad for the FIFA World Cup 2026, with superstar captain Lionel Messi included despite ongoing uncertainty surrounding his participation.

Messi, who guided Argentina to their historic third World Cup title in Qatar four years ago, remains part of coach Lionel Scaloni's provisional plans.

However, Scaloni clarified that the final decision regarding Messi's participation will rest entirely with the veteran forward and his physical condition ahead of the tournament.

The 2026 World Cup, to be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, will mark another major chapter in Messi's legendary international career.

Argentina have been drawn in Group J alongside Algeria national football team, Austria national football team and Jordan national football team. The South American giants will begin their title defence against Algeria on June 16.

The preliminary squad features a blend of experienced stars and emerging young talents. Goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez headlines the options between the posts alongside Gerónimo Rulli and Juan Musso.

In defence, senior players such as Cristian Romero, Nicolás Otamendi and Lisandro Martínez have been retained, while the midfield will once again revolve around Rodrigo De Paul, Enzo Fernández and Alexis Mac Allister.

The attack includes several exciting names alongside Messi, including Julián Álvarez, Lautaro Martínez and Alejandro Garnacho.

One notable omission from the squad is Paulo Dybala, whose absence has surprised many supporters.

Argentina will trim the provisional list before submitting the final squad for the expanded 48-team World Cup, where Scaloni's side will attempt to defend the trophy they won memorably in Qatar in 2022.

Dembélé Wins Ligue 1 Player of the Season Again

PARIS

Ousmane Dembélé has been voted Ligue 1's Player of the Season for the second consecutive year, continuing Paris Saint-Germain's dominance of French football's top individual honours.

The award marked the 10th straight year a PSG player has claimed the prestigious honour. Former PSG superstar Kylian Mbappé had previously won the award five times in succession before leaving for Real Madrid.

The last non-PSG player to receive the award was Alexandre Lacazette while playing for Olympique Lyonnais in 2015.

Dembélé played a crucial role in PSG's title-winning campaign last season, scoring 21 league goals before later winning the Ballon d'Or. However, injuries have limited his impact this season, with the French forward managing 10 league goals and starting only nine matches under coach Luis Enrique.

Despite his reduced domestic appearances, Dembélé has remained influential in the UEFA Champions League. His early goal against Bayern Munich in the semifinal second leg helped PSG secure a 1-1 draw and advance 6-5 on aggregate.

PSG will now face Arsenal in the Champions League final on May 30 as they pursue a second consecutive European title.

PSG youngster Désiré Doué was named Ligue 1's Best Young Player for the second straight season. The 20-year-old forward recently scored the winning goal against Stade Brestois 29, moving PSG closer to a record-extending 14th league crown.

Meanwhile, Pierre Sage won the Best Coach award after guiding RC Lens into an unlikely title challenge despite operating with significantly fewer resources than PSG. Lens goalkeeper Robin Risser claimed the Best Goalkeeper award, while Haiti international Melchie Dumornay was voted the top women's player after starring for OL Lyonnes in a remarkable campaign.

PSG stars sweep major honours while club closes in on another league title

Expanded 48-team WC sparks competitiveness debate

WASHINGTON

The expansion of the FIFA World Cup 2026 from 32 to 48 teams has triggered intense debate over whether a larger tournament can remain competitive while also fulfilling FIFA's ambition of making football more global and commercially successful.

Under the leadership of Gianni Infantino, FIFA has pushed aggressively toward expansion, with the upcoming World Cup set to feature 104 matches spread across more than a month. The move is expected to significantly increase revenue, with FIFA projections estimating earnings of over £5 billion from the tournament.

The tournament's broader reach has allowed several smaller footballing nations such as Curacao, Cape Verde and Haiti to qualify for the global showpiece, offering them unprecedented exposure on football's biggest stage.

For regions such as Africa and Asia, the expansion is viewed as a major opportunity. African football once protested against limited World Cup representation by boycotting the 1966 edition, and the expanded format now offers more places to emerging football nations.

Club says internal investigation continues while cooperating fully with English football authorities investigating allegations

Southampton seek more time for review amid Championship playoff spying controversy

SOUTHAMPTON

Southampton FC have requested additional time to complete an internal review after being charged over allegations of spying on Middlesbrough FC training sessions ahead of their Championship playoff semifinal clash.

The controversy emerged after claims surfaced that unauthorized filming of Middlesbrough's practice sessions had taken place within 72 hours of the crucial playoff fixtures. The English Football League (EFL) formally charged Southampton and requested that an independent disciplinary commission hear the case "at the earliest opportunity."

The first leg of the semifinal ended in a goalless draw, with the decisive second leg scheduled at St Mary's Stadium. The winner will advance to the playoff final against Hull City AFC at Wembley on May 23, with promotion to the Premier League and financial rewards worth at least £200 million at stake. Southampton chief executive Phil Parsons said the club was cooperating fully with authorities while carrying out its own inquiry into the matter.

"The club is fully cooperating with the EFL and the disciplinary commission, whilst also undertaking an internal review to ensure that all facts and context are properly understood," Parsons said in a statement.

He explained that the demanding fixture schedule and limited gap between matches prompted Southampton to seek more time before reaching conclusions.

"We understand the discussion and speculation that has followed over recent days, but we also believe it is important that the full context is established before conclusions are drawn," Parsons added.

The EFL stated that the charges relate to regulations requiring clubs "to act towards each other with the utmost good faith" and specifically prohibit any club from observing or attempting to observe another team's training session within 72 hours of a scheduled match.

Despite the controversy, Parsons urged supporters to rally behind the team ahead of the decisive semifinal clash.

"Our focus now turns fully to this evening's game. This is the time for all of us to get behind the team and create another special atmosphere at St Mary's," he said.

The incident is the latest spying controversy in the Championship since Marcelo Bielsa's Leeds United were fined in 2019 for observing Derby County FC training sessions ahead of a league encounter.

India relay coach Hillier calls for more experience after World Relays disappointment

CHENNAI

India men's 4x100m relay coach James Hillier has admitted the national team lacks experience and squad depth after the quartet's disappointing campaign at the World Athletics Relays 2026 in Botswana earlier this month.

The Indian team was disqualified during the second round after a failed baton exchange between Ragul Kumar and Gurindervir Singh in the third and fourth legs respectively. Ragul stumbled during the exchange and failed to pass the baton, ending India's hopes despite a promising start on the opening day.

India had clocked a season-best 39.07 seconds in the first qualifying round, but injuries severely disrupted preparations ahead of the crucial race.

Regular members Manikanta Hoblidhar and Amlan Borgohain missed the competition due to injuries. Replacement runner Tamil Arasu also suffered an injury while participating in the mixed relay event, forcing the coaching staff into another last-minute change.

Speaking after the Indian Open Athletics Series in Chennai, Hillier accepted responsibility for the poor performance and acknowledged that the young squad struggled under pressure.

"We have to be realistic with these guys. This was a very high-pressure situation. A lot of them had never even travelled overseas before, let alone competed at a World Championship-level event," Hillier said.

The coach emphasised that the focus should be on learning from mistakes rather than criticising the athletes.

"What we now have to do is not chastise the people that made the mistakes, but look at what happened and what we can do in future to fix it," he added.

Hillier revealed that the crucial Ragul-Gurindervir baton exchange had only been practised a handful of times because Tamil Arasu was originally expected to run the leg before his injury setback.

"Losing Tamil through injury was a real problem for us. Harsh Raut had never even run a relay before this event," Hillier explained.

Despite the setback, Hillier remains optimistic about India's preparations for the Asian Games and believes a fully fit squad can deliver stronger performances.

Holger Rune pulls out of French Open, targets comeback during Wimbledon grass season

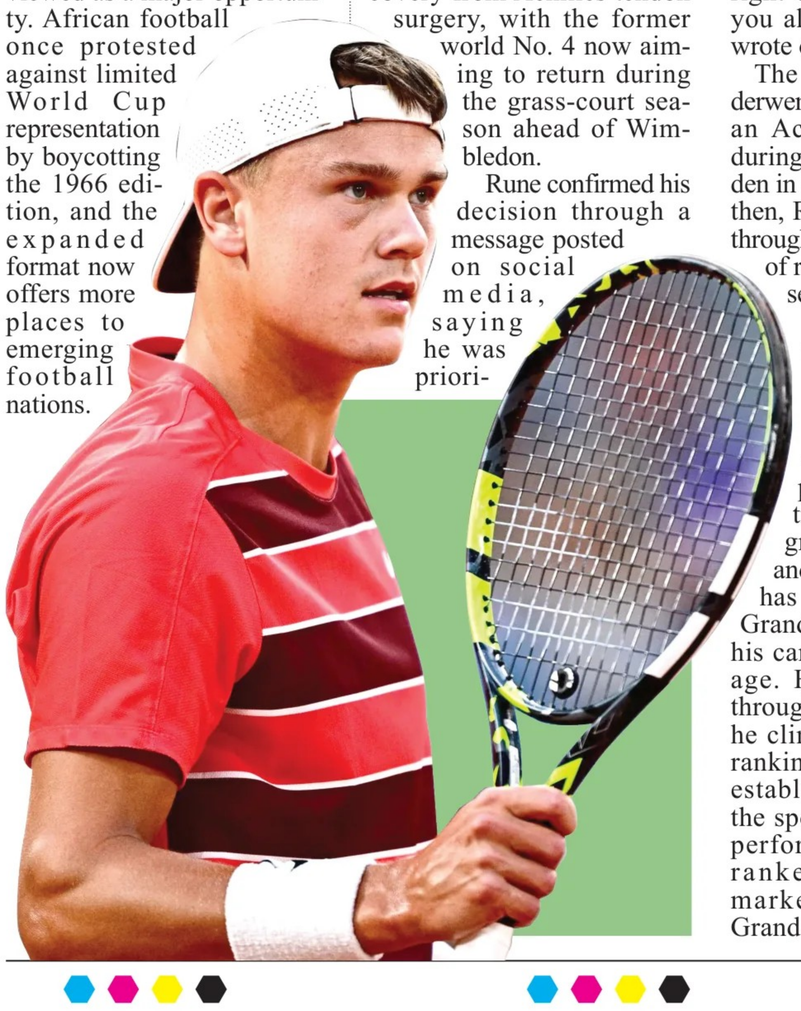
PARIS

Holger Rune has withdrawn from the upcoming French Open as he continues his recovery from Achilles tendon surgery, with the former world No. 4 now aiming to return during the grass-court season ahead of Wimbledon.

Rune confirmed his decision through a message posted on social media, saying he was prioritising his long-term fitness rather than rushing back for the clay-court Grand Slam in Paris. "Tough decision not to play the clay season, but the right one. Can't wait to see you all on the grass," Rune wrote on X.

The 23-year-old Dane underwent surgery after suffering an Achilles tendon injury during a tournament in Sweden in October last year. Since then, Rune has been working through rehabilitation in hopes of returning fully fit for the second half of the season.

Rune's withdrawal is a significant blow to the French Open field, with the young star widely regarded as one of the most talented players of his generation. Known for his aggressive baseline game and fighting spirit, Rune has already reached three Grand Slam quarterfinals in his career despite his young age. He enjoyed a breakthrough period in 2023 when he climbed to a career-high ranking of world No. 4 and established himself among the sport's elite players. His performances against top-ranked opponents had marked him as a future Grand Slam contender.



Sakshi Malik urges authorities to allow Vinesh Phogat participation in Asian Games trials

NEW DELHI

Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi Malik has appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) to permit Vinesh Phogat to participate in the selection trials for this year's Asian Games.

Vinesh, who was attempting to return to competitive wrestling after nearly two years away from the sport, recently received a detailed show-cause notice from the WFI accusing her of indiscipline and violations related to anti-doping procedures. The federation also declared her ineligible to participate in domestic competitions until June 26.

According to the WFI, the 31-year-old wrestler failed to comply with the mandatory six-month notice period required for athletes returning from retirement under United World Wrestling anti-doping regulations.

As a result, Vinesh was unable to compete in the National Open Ranking event in Gonda, which serves as a qualifying trial for the Asian Games 2026.

Speaking through a video message posted on social media platform X, Sakshi criticised the timing of the federation's decision and argued that rules should support athletes attempting comebacks rather than prevent them from competing. "I can give many such examples where sports federations of other countries make rules easier for their players," Sakshi said.

India taps huge wealth from green biogas

India targets USD 1 lakh crore in investments by transforming organic waste into compressed biogas, slashing imports and strengthening the economy through mandatory green fuel blending

NEW DELHI

India is sitting on a goldmine of clean energy that could spark ₹1 lakh crore in new investments. A fresh report reveals that while the country has the potential to produce 62 million tonnes of biogas every year, it is currently using less than one percent of that power.

The report highlights that everyday waste like leftover crops, cow dung, and city trash, is now a "strategic energy asset." By turning this

waste into Compressed Biogas (CBG), India can significantly cut its expensive habit of importing oil and gas from other countries. This shift doesn't just clean up the environment, it strengthens the national economy.

Experts say the real turning point is a new government rule that makes blending biogas with traditional fuels mandatory. This creates a guaranteed market for producers. "The move from just encouraging biogas to making it a requirement changes everything for the better," said Karthick Jonagadla, CEO of Quantace Research. It gives big investors the confidence to build more plants and better pipelines.

Currently, over 100 plants are running, but another 1,000 are already being planned. Major companies like Indian Oil and HPCL are leading the charge by building new networks to get this green fuel to the public. With tax breaks and better pricing now in place, the path is clear for India to turn its organic waste into a massive, multi-billion-rupee success story.

India fuel reserves strong amid global energy crisis

NEW DELHI: Union Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said India has enough fuel reserves for nearly two months and currently faces no shortage despite global energy disruptions. Speaking at the Confederation of Indian Industry summit, he warned that government-run oil companies could suffer losses of up to Rs 1 lakh crore in one quarter if crude oil prices remain high and fuel rates stay unchanged. He added that petrol, diesel, and LPG are being sold below cost. Puri also said India has increased domestic LPG production significantly, strengthening the country's ability to manage the ongoing international energy crisis effectively and smoothly.

QUICK READ

India ready despite rising West Asia crisis

New Delhi

Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said the ongoing West Asia crisis is testing India's economic strength, especially in trade and foreign payments. He explained that India depends heavily on imported crude oil and LPG, much of which passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Tanker movement in the region has reduced sharply due to tensions. He also noted that many Indians working in Gulf countries send money home, making the region important for India's economy. However, Nageswaran said India is better prepared to handle the crisis because of strong infrastructure growth, steady reforms, and continued fiscal discipline by the government.

Retail space demand falls across major Indian cities

New Delhi

According to reports, retail space leasing in malls and busy market areas dropped 15 per cent during January to March across seven major Indian cities. The total leasing stood at 3.1 million square feet, lower than the previous quarter's 3.6 million square feet. Experts said the decline was mainly caused by reduced fresh supply in shopping malls and prime retail locations. The report covered major cities including Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Pune. Despite the fall, demand for quality retail spaces in top locations remained stable during the quarter overall.

Indian chip startup secures funds for AI growth

New Delhi

Indian chip design company HrdWyr has raised USD 13 million in a Series A funding round to develop advanced AI-native chips and strengthen its global market presence. The investment round was led by Ideaspring Capital, with participation from Singularity AMC, Avatar Growth Capital, and Persistent Systems. The company said the fresh funding will help speed up the creation of next-generation system-on-chip products designed for Physical AI technologies. HrdWyr aims to improve customer partnerships and expand business opportunities in important international markets through this latest investment and future technology development plans.

DigiHaat launches Swadeshi marketplace for local products

New Delhi

Government-backed platform DigiHaat has launched a new marketplace called "Swadeshi" to promote Made-in-Bharat products and support local businesses. Powered by the Open Network for Digital Commerce, the platform offers handmade crafts, traditional clothes, home décor items, and food grains. Officials said the initiative removes middlemen, helping artisans and farmers earn better profits. More than 2,000 artisans and 1,100 farmer groups have already joined the platform. DigiHaat recently crossed two million downloads and also provides metro ticket booking, food delivery, and taxi services, making it a growing digital hub for everyday needs across India.

India hosts global meeting to protect diamonds

MUMBAI

A major international meeting to protect the global diamond trade began in Mumbai this week, with India leading the way as the 2026 Chair.

The Kimberley Process Intersessional Meeting, running till May 14th , brings together experts and leaders from 86 countries to ensure that natural diamonds are traded fairly and peacefully.

Suchindra Misra, the Chair of the 2026 meeting, explained that this process is vital for supporting livelihoods and maintaining peace in countries that produce diamonds. The main goal is to keep "conflict diamonds", stones used to fund wars out of the legitimate market. By using a strict certification system, the group ensures that the diamonds in jewelry stores are ethically sourced.

India is currently one of the world's top centers for cutting

India leads the 2026 Kimberley process meeting in Mumbai, focusing on ethical trade, consumer trust, and eliminating conflict diamonds.

and polishing diamonds, making its leadership very important. For 2026, India has introduced a theme focused on the "3Cs"- credibility, compliance, and consumer confidence. The government wants to make sure that when someone buys a diamond, they can trust that it was mined and sold in a responsible way.

Over the next few days, teams will meet to discuss better ways to monitor the trade and support small-scale miners. By working together, these international groups hope to face new challenges and keep natural diamonds a symbol of sustainable beauty. This meeting is a big step in making the diamond industry more transparent and trustworthy for shoppers all around the world.

Singapore acts as a neutral offshore hub, boosting renminbi internationalization and securing its status as Asia's premier financial gateway.

Singapore becomes gateway for China's currency ambition

NEW DELHI

Singapore has solidified its position as a vital bridge for China's plan to turn the renminbi (RMB) into a global currency. According to a new reports, the city-state is now the world's second-largest offshore RMB hub, trailing only Hong Kong, as China looks to reduce its reliance on the US dollar.

The report highlights that Singapore offers Beijing a unique advantage, it is a "politically neutral" and globally trusted financial center.

This is particularly important as regulatory changes in Hong Kong have made some international investors cautious. By using Singapore as a gateway, China can gradually grow its currency's influence across Southeast Asia while maintaining a stable connection to the global economy.

For Singapore, this partnership is a strategic win. It allows the city-state to capture a larger share of trade and wealth management as Southeast Asian economies become more integrated with China. By embedding itself in this "RMB ecosystem," Singapore isn't just facilitating China's growth, it's securing its own future as the premier financial heart of Asia.

KEY MILESTONES IN PARTNERSHIP

- **Massive deposits:** Singapore now holds 276 billion RMB in deposits and cleared a staggering 9.7 trillion RMB in payments in 2024.
- **Double clearing banks:** In a major move, DBS Bank was recently named Singapore's second RMB clearing bank, joining ICBC to provide direct access to Chinese markets.
- **Alternative to SWIFT:** Three major Singaporean banks have joined China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), a direct alternative to the Western-led SWIFT system, making transactions faster and cheaper.
- **Bond market access:** Singapore-based institutions are playing a bigger role in helping foreign investors enter China's $25 trillion bond market.

Oil firms risk losing yearly profits

MUMBAI

High global oil prices could wipe out the entire yearly profits of India's state-run oil companies, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri warned the public in a recent meeting.

Speaking at a business summit, the Minister highlighted that the ongoing conflict in the Middle East has pushed crude prices above $100 per barrel, putting immense pressure on the nation's fuel retailers.

Currently, major companies like Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum are losing nearly ₹1,000 crore every single day. Minister Puri estimated that if these high prices continue, the combined losses for just one quarter could reach ₹1 lakh crore. This massive shortfall would be enough to erase all the profits these companies were expected to make during the 2025-26 financial year.

The surge in prices is largely due to fears of supply disruptions caused by tensions between the U.S. and Iran. While industry experts previously predicted high losses, the actual financial damage has already exceeded those early forecasts. This situation has raised concerns about whether fuel prices at the pump will stay stable or if the government will need to step in.

To calm worries about fuel shortages, Minister Puri assured the public that India is well-prepared. The country currently holds enough crude oil and gas reserves to last about 60 days. Additionally, the government has significantly boosted local LPG production to ensure that cooking gas remains available for families. While the financial outlook for oil firms is tough, the Minister emphasized that maintaining a steady energy supply remains the top priority.

Mandviya demands fair treatment for contract workers

NEW DELHI

Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandviya sent a strong message to India's business leaders, demanding better protection and timely pay for contractual workers.

Speaking at the CII Annual Business Summit 2026, the Minister warned that agencies failing to pay workers on time should be removed and face strict legal action.

Mandviya pointed out that many contractual employees face daily stress because their agencies delay salaries. He reminded the audience that every worker, regardless of their contract, deserves dignity and full pay. "If you have contractual workers, they must be paid on time," he stated, urging companies to monitor their hiring agencies more closely to prevent labour tensions and unfair treatment.

Looking back at the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minister recalled the hardships faced by migrant workers on the roads and at railway stations. To prevent such a crisis from happening again, he proposed a new partnership between the government and industries to manage future emergencies. He also announced that a new National Employment Policy will soon be shared with the public for feedback to help create more stable jobs.

India's ethanol push shields economy from oil shock

NEW DELHI

As global oil markets reel from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and soaring crude prices, India's ethanol-blending program is being hailed as a "biofuel success story." According to reports, it has been highlighted on how India's aggressive move toward greener fuel is providing a vital cushion against the current international energy crisis.

From a tiny 1.5% blending level in 2014, India has rapidly scaled up to achieve nearly 20% ethanol blending (E20) ahead of its original schedule. The country is now setting its sights even higher, preparing for E85 and E100 fuels designed for flex-fuel vehicles that can run almost entirely on ethanol.

Strategy behind the success

The report credits India's 2018 National Policy on Biofuels as the major turning point. This policy allowed ethanol to be made from more than just sugarcane, opening the door for:

- Damaged food grains and surplus rice
- Maize (corn)
- Agricultural residues (crop waste)

By using these materials, India has reduced its reliance on water-intensive sugarcane and turned grain-producing regions in Northern and Central India into "energy hubs."

What started as a way to cut carbon emissions has transformed into a powerful tool for energy security. By blending locally produced ethanol with petrol, India is saving billions of dollars that would otherwise be spent on imported crude oil.

The benefits are also being felt deeply in the rural economy. The high demand for biofuel feedstock is putting more money into the pockets of farmers and creating thousands of jobs in distilleries, logistics, and manufacturing. As instability in West Asia continues to threaten global supply chains, India's ethanol strategy is proving to be a masterclass in building economic resilience through homegrown innovation.

Power demand to surge as economy grows

NEW DELHI

India is bracing for a significant jump in electricity needs as the nation's economy continues to climb. A new report predicts that power demand will grow by 5 percent in the coming year. This follows a period of slower growth and is driven by a massive increase in the use of air conditioners and cooling systems during hotter months.

The surge in demand comes at a time when temperatures are rising and monsoon rainfall is expected to be lower than usual. While this heat keeps the fans turning, it also lowers water levels, making it harder for hydropower plants to produce electricity. To fill this gap, the country will rely on a mix of green energy and traditional coal to keep the lights on for millions of households and businesses.

Renewable energy, especially solar and wind power, is expected to see a 15 percent boost this year. This follows a record-breaking expansion in 2026, where the country added a massive 50 gigawatts of clean energy capacity. However, coal remains the backbone of India's grid, still providing over 70 percent of the nation's total electricity.

Despite the pressure to build more power plants, experts believe India's energy companies are in a strong financial position to handle the challenge. With coal stocks currently sufficient for about 18 days, the government is focused on ensuring a steady supply. As the country moves toward a busier and hotter year, the energy sector is working overtime to match the pace of a growing India.

RUSH TO GRAB SPACE

Foreign brands flock to India amid retail boom

MUMBAI

India's shopping scene is witnessing a massive surge as international brands rush to grab space in the country's growing market.

A new report reveals that retail leasing reached a staggering 3.1 million square feet across the top seven cities in the first three months of 2026.

Global retailers are showing immense confidence in India, with well-known foreign brands recording a 48% growth in leasing compared to last year. These companies are betting big on India's rising middle class and their desire for premium shopping experiences. While cities like Delhi and Hyderabad are seeing high demand for mall spaces, retailers in Bengaluru and Chennai are focusing more on popular high-street locations.

Experts note that 2025 was a record-breaking year for the sector, and 2026 is expected to follow the same path. The demand is currently so high that it is outstripping the available supply. About 46 million square feet of new retail space is planned to be built by 2030 to keep up with this hunger for growth.

The report also highlights that it isn't just luxury brands driving the trend. Value fashion, online brands opening physical stores, and even automobile showrooms are taking up large spaces.

Even cities like Kolkata are becoming major players, capturing 10 percent of the national market. As long as domestic consumption remains strong, India's retail real estate looks set for a long and successful expansion cycle.

RCB's Tim David Fined for Obscene Gesture vs MI

Australian all-rounder also handed demerit points after breaching IPL conduct regulations during match

NEW DELHI

Tim David of Royal Challengers Bengaluru was fined 30 per cent of his match fee and handed two demerit points for making an "obscene" gesture during the IPL 2026 match against Mumbai Indians, the league announced.

The incident occurred during RCB's thrilling two-wicket victory over Mumbai Indians in a high-pressure contest that ended in dramatic fashion. While the exact nature of the gesture was not detailed by the IPL authorities, the league confirmed that the Australian all-rounder had breached Level 1 of the IPL Code of Conduct for Players and Team Officials.

"Tim was found to have breached Article 2.6 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, which relates to using a gesture that is obscene, offensive or insulting," an IPL media advisory stated. The statement further added that David accepted the punishment without contesting the charge.

"Tim admitted to the offence and accepted the sanction imposed by Match Referee Amit Sharma," the advisory said.

Under IPL regulations, Level 1 offences are considered relatively minor breaches, but repeated violations can attract stricter sanctions, including higher fines or suspension points. The addition of two demerit points means David will need to remain cautious through the remainder of the tournament.

The controversy came shortly after a tense encounter between RCB and Mumbai Indians, where Bengaluru held their nerve to secure a narrow victory and strengthen their playoff ambitions. David, known for his aggressive batting and energetic on-field presence, has been an important contributor for RCB this season. Neither the player nor the franchise issued any separate statement regarding the incident after the IPL announcement.

The disciplinary action has nevertheless drawn attention as the IPL continues to maintain strict standards regarding player behaviour and on-field conduct. Match officials have consistently monitored player actions closely this season, particularly gestures or exchanges that could be deemed offensive or unsporting. Despite the fine, David remains available for selection in RCB's upcoming fixtures unless further disciplinary issues arise later in the tournament.

Shreyas criticised as Chahal unused in Punjab loss to Delhi

DHARAMSHALA

Shreyas Iyer came under heavy criticism after choosing not to use veteran leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal during Punjab Kings's defeat against Delhi Capitals in the IPL 2026 clash at Dharamshala.

Punjab slumped to their fourth consecutive defeat of the season as Delhi comfortably chased down the target, while Chahal remained an unused bowler throughout the contest despite being included in the playing XI as a specialist spinner.

The decision surprised many former cricketers and analysts, especially after Punjab's pace attack struggled badly on a batting-friendly surface. Bowlers including Marcus Stoinis, Yash Thakur, Ben Dwarshuis and Marco Jansen all conceded runs at an economy rate exceeding 11 per over.

Former India cricketer Dodda Ganesh strongly criticised the tactical call, describing the move as "foolhardy".

"To think that a champion bowler like Chahal wouldn't have induced one mistake from those left-handers' bats is foolhardy to say the least. He any day has a better chance of picking wickets than Stoinis," Ganesh wrote on social media.

Former India batter Mohammad Kaif also expressed surprise that neither side relied on spin despite statistics favouring slower bowlers at the venue in recent seasons.

"Seasoned match winners Axar Patel and Yuzi Chahal playing no role with the ball in a T20 game is puzzling," Kaif posted.

Former cricketers question tactical call as Punjab suffer another disappointing IPL defeat at Dharamshala

Responding to the criticism after the match, Iyer explained that seam movement early in the innings influenced his decision to continue with the pacers instead of introducing Chahal into the attack.

"There was absolutely a thought in my mind, but the way the ball was seaming and helping seamers, I felt if we had executed our line and length precisely, we could have extracted wickets," Iyer said during the post-match presentation.

However, Punjab's seamers failed to make the expected impact as Delhi cruised to victory, leaving many questioning whether Chahal's experience could have changed the outcome.

Gavaskar proposes five-over rule to help bowlers in high-scoring IPL matches

MUMBAI

Indian batting legend Sunil Gavaskar has proposed a major rule change in T20 cricket, suggesting that bowlers should be allowed to bowl a fifth over as a reward for taking wickets during matches in the ongoing IPL 2026 season.

Gavaskar's comments come amid an extraordinary run-fest in this year's Indian Premier League, where batters have dominated attacks across venues. More than halfway through the tournament, teams have already registered 46 totals exceeding 200 runs, while both sides crossed the 200-mark in 20 matches.

According to Gavaskar, the current rules heavily favour batters and leave bowlers with very limited opportunities to influence matches consistently.

"The restriction of only four overs to a bowler could be looked at again," Gavaskar said.

"If a batter can bat the entire 20 overs, why can't a bowler who gets, say, three wickets in his four overs be allowed to bowl another over as a reward for getting those wickets?" he asked.

The former India captain believes such a rule would encourage attacking cricket from bowlers instead of defensive line-and-length strategies aimed merely at containing runs.

"This way teams will also try getting wickets instead of trying only to save runs being scored. After all, the best dot ball is the wicket-taking dot ball," Gavaskar added.

The legendary opener pointed out that bowlers are already operating under several disadvantages in modern T20 cricket, including smaller boundaries and strict wide-ball interpretations for short-pitched deliveries.

"Everything is stacked against the bowlers," Gavaskar observed, adding that providing captains greater flexibility with successful bowlers could help restore balance in the format.

Gavaskar also suggested that the proposed rule should first be tested in domestic and local tournaments before being considered at the IPL level. He recommended trying it in city-based competitions and eventually in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy before introducing it in future IPL seasons. The idea has already sparked debate among fans and experts, with many agreeing that T20 cricket increasingly favours batters and leaves bowlers with little room for recovery once momentum shifts during an innings.

Youngster Shedge's explosive cameos spark debate over Punjab's struggling middle-order combinations this season

Ponting's batting strategy questioned after Punjab Kings' fourth straight IPL defeat

DHARAMSHALA

Ricky Ponting's tactical decisions came under scrutiny after Punjab Kings suffered their fourth consecutive defeat in IPL 2026, going down by three wickets to Delhi Capitals in a high-scoring thriller at Dharamshala.

Punjab appeared firmly in control after posting an imposing 210 for five and reducing Delhi to 33 for three early in the chase. However, fighting half-centuries from Axar Patel and David Miller turned the game around before youngster Madhav Tiwari provided the finishing touches to keep Delhi alive in the playoff race.

The defeat intensified concerns over Punjab's fading campaign after an impressive first half of the season in which they won six of their opening seven matches.

One of the major talking points after the match was the continued lower-order use of

emerging batter Suryansh Shedge, whose explosive cameo once again stood out for Punjab. Walking in at No. 7, Shedge smashed 21 runs off just eight balls, including a fearless six against Mitchell Starc on the hat-trick delivery after Starc had dismissed Marcus Stoinis and Shashank Singh in consecutive deliveries.

Shedge's late assault lifted Punjab from 187 to 210 and once again highlighted his finishing abilities. Earlier this season, the youngster had also impressed with a match-saving half-century against Gujarat Titans.

The performances have sparked debate over whether Ponting should promote Shedge higher up the batting order, particularly with experienced middle-order players like Stoinis and Shashank struggling for consistency.

Punjab's top order, led by Priyansh Arya and skipper Shreyas Iyer, has delivered regularly, but repeated collapses in the middle overs have hurt the side in crucial matches.

With tough fixtures against Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Lucknow Super Giants remaining, Punjab now face mounting pressure to rethink their combinations quickly and revive their fading playoff hopes.

Tamim regrets Bangladesh's WC exclusion, says ICC offered room for solution

DHAKA

Former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal has broken his silence on the controversy surrounding Bangladesh's exclusion from the T20 World Cup 2026, expressing disappointment over how the situation was handled by the previous administration of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

The tournament, ultimately won by India national cricket team, was overshadowed by Bangladesh's absence after tensions escalated over security concerns ahead of the event hosted in India. The controversy began after pacer Mustafizur Rahman was reportedly removed from the Kolkata Knight Riders squad amid religious tensions in Bangladesh. Citing player safety concerns, the BCB requested the International Cricket Council (ICC) to move Bangladesh's matches from India to Sri Lanka. However, the ICC rejected the request due to logistical constraints and the tournament schedule, resulting in Bangladesh being left out and Scotland national cricket team taking their place.

Tamim, who now heads the BCB's interim board, said the crisis could have been resolved through better communication and dialogue.

"What was done and how it was handled by the previous BCB administration was not right. The ICC was lenient, there was room to find a solution. We should have found it," Tamim told.

The former opener said the decision deeply hurt Bangladeshi cricket supporters, recalling the emotional celebrations after Bangladesh qualified for their first World Cup in the late 1990s. "We gave away a World Cup without even having a proper dialogue. There might be players in that squad who will never play in a World Cup again. That I did not take nicely," he added.

IPL playoff race heats up as six teams battle for final qualification spots

NEW DELHI

The race for the IPL 2026 playoffs has entered a thrilling phase with no team officially qualifying yet despite the tournament nearing the end of its league stage.

With less than two weeks remaining before the knockout rounds, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Gujarat Titans currently lead the standings with 14 points each from 11 matches and are considered favourites to secure playoff berths.

According to projections shared by IPL broadcasters, Gujarat Titans, RCB and Sunrisers Hyderabad each have nearly an 80 per cent chance of reaching the playoffs. Punjab Kings remain in contention with a 62.5 per cent qualification probability despite their recent slump in form.

Meanwhile, Chennai Super Kings have a 42.7 per cent chance of advancing, while Rajasthan Royals — powered by the emergence of youngster Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

— stand close behind at 41.8 per cent.

The playoff battle remains open because the "magic number" in the 10-team IPL format has historically been 16 points. Since 2022, teams finishing fourth have generally qualified with at least 16 points, although in 2024, Delhi Capitals, Chennai, Rajasthan and RCB all finished on 14 points, with net run rate deciding the final spot.

Further down the table, Kolkata Knight Riders still possess an outside chance at 11.6 per cent despite having only nine points from 10 matches. Delhi Capitals, with 10 points from 12 matches, face an uphill task with their qualification chances dropping to just 1.2 per cent.

Meanwhile, Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants have already been eliminated from playoff contention.

Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer admitted his side's repeated bowling and fielding failures were hurting their campaign after a fourth straight defeat against Delhi Capitals.

Rahul Dravid joins European T20 League as Dublin franchise owner ahead of 2026 launch

DUBLIN

Former India captain Rahul Dravid has been unveiled as the owner of the Dublin franchise in the upcoming European T20 Premier League (ETPL), with league co-owner Abhishek Bachchan saying the batting legend's credibility and long-term vision made him the ideal choice for the project.

The ETPL, scheduled to launch later this year, aims to expand cricket's footprint across Europe through a mix of franchise competition and grassroots development. Speaking about Dravid's association with the league, Bachchan stressed that the move was about building a strong cricketing ecosystem rather than attracting celebrity attention. "I wanted somebody like Rahul because of the kind of credibility and vision that he brings to anything that he does," Bachchan said.

The tournament has already attracted several prominent names from international cricket. Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who recently retired from Indian cricket, will captain and mentor the Dublin franchise.

The league is being organised in partnership with Cricket Ireland, Cricket Scotland and the Royal Dutch Cricket Association. Teams will represent Dublin, Belfast, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

Bachchan said the league's objective is to help Europe emerge as a major cricketing market while creating opportunities for local talent.

"To have people like Steve Waugh, Jonty Rhodes and Dravid on board shows the intent of the ETPL," he said. "That will dictate the kind of cricket and the way they support young players and help create new talent from local areas." Dravid said the developmental aspect of the project convinced him to become involved.

"What attracted me to ETPL was the larger vision behind it — the opportunity to help grow cricket in Europe by strengthening grassroots development and creating pathways for emerging talent," Dravid said.

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